ANDREI SAKHAROV:
THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF SCIENTISTS

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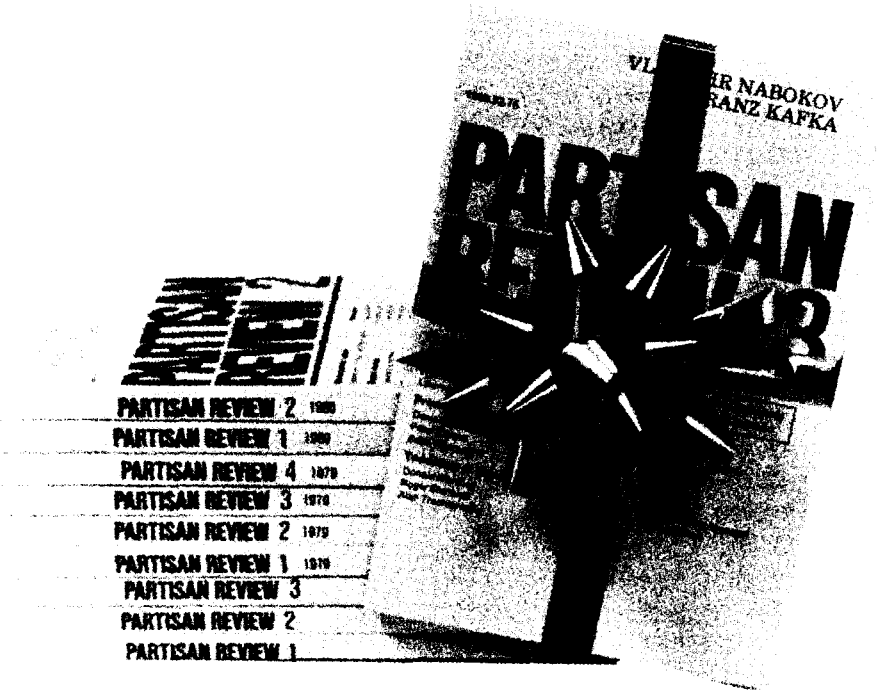

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NOTES

Where The Jackals Howl, a collection of stories by **AMOS OZ**, was published last April. . . . *The Exhausted Isle,* by **DANIEL BELL**, Henry Ford II Professor of Sociology at Harvard, will be published in 1982. . . . **ARTHUR A. COHEN**'s latest book is *Acts of Theft.* . . . **NORMAN F. CANTOR** is professor of history and sociology at New York University. . . . **CARLOS RIPOLL**, who teaches at Queen's College, has written extensively on Cuban culture and history. . . . Author of *The Age of Structuralism,* **EDITH KURZWEIL** teaches sociology at Rutgers. . . . The Guild Hall Theatre in East Hampton will stage a work of **MICHAEL BRAUDE**'s this fall. . . . After more than one half-dozen books of poetry in English, **SIV CEDERING** has turned to Swedish for her first two novels. . . . **ANGEL CUADRA**'s most recent collection of poetry is *A Correspondence of Poems.* . . . Poet in Residence at the University of Montana, **NAOMI LAZARD** has written a political thriller, *The Gates of Horn,* about revolution in Central America. . . . **R.S. LEVINE** teaches English at Stanford. . . . **JONATHAN BAUMBACH**'s new novel, *My Father More or Less,* is coming out soon. . . . **ERIKA APFELBAUM** is a social psychologist affiliated with the National Center for Scientific Research at the University of Paris VII. . . . An Associate Director of the National Theatre of Great Britain, **MICHAEL KUSTOW** spent the past year as Literary Director of the American Repertory Theater. . . . Brandeis University Professor Emeritus **ARTHUR BERGER** is a member of the composition faculty of the New England Conservatory. . . . **NEIL SCHMITZ** teaches American Literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo. . . . **ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE** is a member of the history department at the State University of New York at Binghamton. . . . **BARBARA ROSECRANCE** teaches English at Cornell. . . . **JANE MARCUS** has edited two volumes of feminist essays on Virginia Woolf and her edition of Rebecca West's Socialist-feminist essays will soon be available from Viking. . . . **HAYDEN WHITE** chairs the Program in the History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. . . .

Note: The contributor's note for Allan Silver in our #3 1981 issue should read: Allan Silver is professor of sociology at Columbia University.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Andrei Sakharov's letter on the Responsibility of Scientists was sent to the conference of American scientists at Rockefeller University on May 1 and 2, 1981, honoring the Russian physicist on his sixtieth birthday. The autobiographical resumé was written for *samizdat.*

It was a very impressive gathering. The participants included leading nuclear physicists, advisors to several presidents and governmental agencies, several philosophers, and outstanding scientists in other areas besides physics. Among the speakers were: Victor Weisskopf, Herbert York, Stanislaw Ulam, Jerome Wiesner, McGeorge Bundy, Sir Karl Popper, Bayard Rustin, Harrison Salisbury, Philip Handler, and Ernest Nagel.

There was also a more informal celebration and tribute to the Soviet scientist at the New School, at which John Everett, president of the New School, offered a teaching post to Sakharov if he were ever permitted to leave.

Some of the talks described Sakharov's scientific accomplishments, others stressed the inhuman treatment of Sakharov and other dissidents in the Soviet Union. There was an exhilarating feeling of solidarity with the great Russian figure and with other victims of the Soviet regime.

However, another note crept into the conference, mostly in the discussion, but also in the prepared papers: an insistent and shrill note that had little to do with the main purpose of the meeting and was often in conflict with it. It came from all sides: from the walls, from the underground. From the hearts of many of the participants came the cry for peace and disarmament. It was the desperate call of the human conscience for a sane and peaceful world. This was obviously the voice of the radical-liberal mind in this country and in much of Europe, the voice of decency and political innocence; and in the context of this conference it demonstrated that scientists were like everyone else. If one were to compare them to writers, they were neither more sophisticated nor more naive. But this undercurrent of pacifist sentiment, however sincere and passionate, was to some extent in opposition to the original spirit of the meeting, and not only to the general meaning of Sakharov's dissidence but specifically to the message of his letter.

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The contradiction between the appeals for disarmament and the political significance of Sakharov's martyrdom were dramatized by some of the attempts to interpret the text of the letter. The comments by some of the discussants on Sakharov's remarks about disarmament and nuclear weapons were particularly confused. In an understandably cryptic passage, Sakharov says:

> "I consider disarmament necessary and possible only on the basis of strategic parity. Additional agreements covering all kinds of mass destruction are needed. After strategic parity has been achieved, a parity which takes account of all the political, psychological, and geographical factors involved, and if totalitarian expansion is brought to an end, then agreements should be reached prohibiting the first use of nuclear weapons, and later, banning such weapons."

It is not surprising that those who talk about nuclear disarmament without considering Russian intentions or power could not grasp the meaning of this passage. For Sakharov has to use an Aesopian language. It seems to me he is implying that Russia is ahead of the United States, and that disarmament can only be arrived at when the United States has parity. Sakharov appears to indicate, too, that it is Russia that is likely to make a first strike, and that this can be prevented only by the fear of American retaliation. Otherwise, why is it necessary to have parity and to stop "totalitarian expansion" before banning a first strike. What Sakharov obviously has in mind is that it is meaningless to ban a first strike, unless you have the power to enforce the ban.

Another interesting difference between Sakharov and those scientists who argued for outlawing nuclear power is his insistence that the "dangers of nuclear power have been exaggerated in the West, and that such distortion is harmful." No one at the conference commented on this flat statement by Sakharov. This omission itself did point up the cleavage between the Communist dissidents and the left in the West. It would appear that the dissidents live much closer to political reality than does much of the left in America and Europe.

Despite these disconcerting evidences of political divisions, that often undermine our support of the Russian dissidents, the meeting, as I have indicated, did generate the kind of enthusiasm that comes only from collective action. And it reminded one that most of the recent protests have been against right-wing violations of human rights, while Soviet or Arab transgressions have been played down or ignored. One of the reasons, I am sure, is the almost obsessive concern by many liberals and by much of the left with our own

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moral purity, and a systematic indifference — or underestimation — of the repressions veiled by the slogans of socialism and national liberation. Hence the demands made of the democratic West are immeasurably greater than those made of the totalitarian East and Arab states. If anything was proven by the ideological differences at the conference, it is that not even Utopianism can be unilateral.

It is as though part of the liberal mind has been paralyzed by "progressive" myths, which seem to dictate that advanced thinking put its social ideals above all other political concerns. On the other hand, the reaction of the new conservatives has merely added to the confusion by spreading its own myths about America, and by reversing its options, that is, by sacrificing the idea of social justice to national interests.

W.P.

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Andrei Sakharov

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SCIENTISTS*

Because of the international nature of our profession, scientists form the one real worldwide community which exists today. There is no doubt about this with respect to the substance of science: Schrödinger's equation and the formula $E = mc^2$ are equally valid on all continents. But the integration of the scientific community has inevitably progressed beyond narrow professional interests and now embraces a broad range of universal issues, including ethical questions. And I believe this trend should and will continue.

Scientists, engineers, and other specialists derive from their professional knowledge and the advantages of their occupations a broad and deep understanding of the potential benefits—but also the risks—entailed in the application of science and technology. They also develop an awareness of the positive and negative tendencies of progress generally, and its possible consequences.

Colossal opportunities exist for the application of recent advances in physics, chemistry, and biochemistry; technology and engineering; computer science; medicine and genetics; physiology and hygiene; microbiology (including industrial microbiology); industrial and agricultural management techniques; psychology; and other exact and social sciences. And we can anticipate more achievements to come. We all share the responsibility to work for the full realization of the results of scientific research in a world where most people's lives have become more difficult, where so many are threatened by hunger, premature illness and untimely death.

But scientists and scholars cannot fail to think about the dangers stemming from uncontrolled progress, from unregulated industrial development, and especially from military applications of scientific achievements. There has been public discussion of topics related to scientific progress: nuclear power; the population explo-

* English translation of Andrei Sakharov's letter and of his autobiographical note courtesy of Khronika Press.

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sion; genetic engineering; regulation of industry to protect the environment; protection of air quality, of flora and fauna, and of rivers, lakes, seas and oceans; the impact of mass media. Unfortunately, despite the urgent and serious nature of the issues at stake, such discussions are often uninformed, prejudiced, or politicized, and sometimes simply dishonest. Experts, therefore, are under an obligation to subject these problems to unbiased and searching examination, making all socially significant information available to the public in direct, firsthand form, and not just in filtered versions. The discussion of nuclear power, a subject of prime importance, is an instructive example. I have expressed elsewhere my opinion that the dangers of nuclear power have been exaggerated in the West, and that such distortion is harmful.

With some important exceptions (primarily affecting totalitarian countries), scientists are not only better informed than the average person, but also strive for and enjoy more independence and freedom. Freedom, however, always entails responsibility. Scientists and other experts already influence or have the capacity to influence public opinion and their governments. (That influence should not be exaggerated, but it is substantial.) My view of the situation of scientists in the contemporary world has convinced me that they have special professional and social responsibilities. It is often difficult to separate one from the other—the communication of information, the popularization of scientific knowledge, and the publication of endorsements or warnings are examples of activities with both professional and social aspects.

Similar complications arise when scientists become involved in questions of disarmament: in developing strategy for or participating in international negotiations; in advancing proposals or issuing appeals to governments or to the public; and in alerting them to dangers. Disarmament is a separate, critically important issue which requires a profound, thorough, and scientifically daring approach. I realize that more detailed treament is needed, but now I will simply outline a few ideas. I consider disarmament necessary and possible only on the basis of strategic parity. Additional agreements covering all kinds of weapons of mass destruction are needed. After strategic parity in conventional arms has been achieved, a parity which takes account of all the political, psychological and geographical factors involved, and if totalitarian expansion is brought to an end, then agreements should be reached prohibiting the first use of nuclear weapons, and later, banning such weapons.

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Another subject which is closely connected to questions of peace, trust, and understanding among countries is the international defense of human rights. Freedom of opinion, freedom to exchange information, and freedom of movement are necessary for true accountability of the authoritites which in turn prevents abuses of power in domestic and international matters. I believe that such accountability would make impossible tragic mistakes like the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and would inhibit manifestations of an expansionist foreign policy and acts of internal repression.

The unrestricted sale of newspapers, magazines, and books published abroad would be a major step toward effective freedom of information in totalitarian countries. Perhaps even more significant would be the abolition of censorship which should concern first of all the scientists and intelligentsia of totalitarian countries. It is important to demand a halt to jamming of foreign broadcasts which deprives millions of access to the uncensored information needed to form an independent judgment of events. (Jamming was resumed in the USSR in August 1980 after a seven year interval.)

I am convinced that support of Amnesty International's call for a general, worldwide amnesty for prisoners of conscience is of special importance. The political amnesties proclaimed by a number of countries in recent years have helped to improve the atmosphere. An amnesty for prisoners of conscience in the USSR, in Eastern Europe, and in all other countries where political prisoners or prisoners of conscience are detained would not only be of major humanitarian significance but could also enhance international confidence and security.

The worldwide character of the scientific community assumes particular importance when dealing with such problems. By its international defense of persecuted scientists and of all persons whose rights have been violated, the scientific community confirms its international mandate which is so essential for successful scientific work and for service to society.

Western scientists are familiar with the names of many Soviet colleagues who have been subjected to unlawful repressions. (I shall confine my discussion to the Soviet Union since I am better informed about it, but serious human rights violations occur in other countries including Eastern European countries.) The individuals I mention have neither advocated nor used violence since they consider publicity the only acceptable, effective, and nonpernicious way of defending human rights. Thus, they are all prisoners of con-

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science as defined by Amnesty International. Their stories have much else in common. Their trials were conducted in flagrant violation of statutory procedures and in defiance of elementary common sense. My friend Sergei Kovalev was convicted in 1975 in the absence of the defendant and counsel, that is, with no possibility whatsoever for a defense. He was sentenced to seven years labor camp and three years internal exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda allegedly contained in the *samizdat* news magazine *A Chronicle of Current Events,* but there was no examination of the substance of the charge.

Comparable breaches of law marked the trials of Yury Orlov, the founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group, and of other members of the Helsinki Groups and associated committees: Victor Nekipelov, Leonard Ternovsky, Mykola Rudenko, Alexander Podrabinek (and his brother Kirill), Gleb Yakunin, Vladimir Slepak, Malva Landa, Robert Nazarian, Eduard Arutyunian, Vyacheslav Bakhmin, Oles Berdnik, Oksana Meshko, Mykola Matusevich and his wife, and Miroslav Marinovich. Tatiana Osipova, Irina Grivnina, and Felix Serebrov have been imprisoned pending trial. Yury Orlov's lawyer missed part of the trial proceedings when he was locked up forcibly in chambers adjoining the courtroom. Orlov's wife was frisked in a crude way and her clothing ripped during a search for written notes or a tape recorder, all from fear that the court's grotesque secrets might be revealed.

In the labor camps, prisoners of conscience suffer cruel treatment: arbitrary confinement in punishment cells; torture by cold and hunger; infrequent family visits subject to capricious cancellation; and similar restrictions on correspondence.

They share all the rigors of the Soviet penal regimen for common criminals while suffering the added strain of pressure to "embark on the path of reform," i.e., to renounce their beliefs. I would like to remind you that not once has any international organization, such as the Red Cross or a lawyer's association, been able to visit Soviet labor camps.

Political prisoners are often rearrested, and monstrous sentences imposed. Ornithologist Mart Niklus, poet Vasily Stus, physics teacher Oleksei Tikhy, lawyer Levko Lukyanenko, philologist Viktoras Petkus and Balys Gajauskas have all received sentences of ten years labor camp and five years internal exile as recidivists. A new trial is expected for Paruir Airikian who is still in labor camp. Within the last few days I have been shocked by the fifth (!) arrest of

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my friend Anatoly Marchenko, a worker and author of two talented and important books: *My Testimony* and *From Tarusa to Siberia.* Imprisoned religious believers include Rostislav Galetsky, Bishop Nikolai Goretoi, Alexander Ogorodnikov, and Boris Perchatkin. Imprisoned workers inlcude Yury Grimm and Mikhail Kubobaka. Alexei Murzhenko and Yury Fedorov are still imprisoned. I shall name only a few scientists deprived of their freedom; many others could be added to the list: Anatoly Shcharansky, the young computer scientist now famous around the world; mathematicians Tatiana Velikanova, Alexander Lavut, Alexander Bolonkin, and Vazif Meilanov; computer scientist Victor Brailovsky; economist Ida Nudel; engineers Reshat Dzhemilev and Antanas Terleckas; physicists Rolan Kadiyev, Iosif Zisels, and Iosif Dyadkin; chemists Valery Abramkin and Juri Kukk; philologists Igor Ogurtsov and Mustafa Dzhemilev; and Vladimir Balakhonov.

A common violation of human rights, and one which especially affects scientists, is denial of permission to emigrate. The names of many "refuseniks" are known to the West.

I was banished without a trial to Gorky more than a year ago and placed under a regimen of almost total isolation. A few days ago the KGB stole my manuscripts and notebooks which contained extracts from scientific books and journals. This is a new attempt to deprive me of any opportunity for intellectual activity, even in my solitude, and to rob me of my memory. For more than three years Elizaveta Alexeyeva, my son's fiancée, has been arbitrarily prevented from leaving the Soviet Union. I have mentioned my own situation because of the absence of any legal basis for the actions taken and because the detention of Elizaveta is undisguised blackmail directed against me. She is a hostage of the state.

I appeal to scientists everywhere to defend those who have been repressed. I believe that in order to protect innocent persons it is permissible and, in many cases, necessary to adopt extraordinary measures such as an interruption of scientific contacts or other types of boycotts. I urge the use, as well, of all the possibilities of publicity and of diplomacy. In addressing the Soviet leaders, it is important to take into account that they do not know about—and probably do not want to know about—most letters and appeals directed to them. Therefore, personal interventions by Western officials who meet with their Soviet counterparts have particular significance. Western scientists should use their influence to press for such interventions.

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I hope that carefully thought out and organized actions in defense of victims of repression will ease their lot and add strength, authority, and energy to the international scientific community.

I have titled this letter "The Responsibility of Scientists." Tatiana Velikanova, Yury Orlov, Sergei Kovalev, and many others have decided this question for themselves by taking the path of active, self-sacrificing struggle for human rights and for an open society. Their sacrifices are enormous, but they are not in vain. These individuals are improving the ethical image of our world.

Many of their colleagues who live in totalitarian countries but who have not found within themselves the strength for such struggle, do try to fulfill honestly their professional responsibilities. It is, in fact, essential to work at one's profession. But has not the time come for those scientists, who often exhibit their perception and nonconformity when with close friends, to demonstrate their sense of responsibility in some fashion which has more social significance, and to take a more public stand, at least on issues such as the defense of their persecuted colleagues and control over the faithful execution of domestic laws and the performance of international obligations? Every true scientist should undoubtedly muster sufficient courage and integrity to resist the temptation and the habit of conformity. Unfortunately, we are familiar with too many counterexamples in the Soviet Union, sometimes using the excuse of protecting one's laboratory or institute (usually just a pretext), sometimes for the sake of one's career, sometimes for the sake of foreign travel (a major lure in a closed country such as ours). And was it not shameful for Yury Orlov's colleagues to expel him secretly from the Armenian Academy of Sciences while other colleagues in the USSR Academy of Sciences shut their eyes to the expulsion and also to his physical condition? (He is close to death.) Many active and passive accomplices in such affairs may themselves someday attract the growing appetite of Moloch. Nothing good can come of this. Better to avert it.

Western scientists face no threat of prison or labor camp for public stands; they cannot be bribed by an offer of foreign travel to forsake such activity. But this in no way diminishes their responsibility. Some Western intellectuals warn against social involvement as a form of politics. But I am not speaking about a struggle for power—it is not politics. It is a struggle to preserve peace and those ethical values which have been developed as our civilization evolved. By

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their example and by their fate, prisoners of conscience affirm that the defense of justice, the international defense of individual victims of violence, the defense of mankind's lasting interests are the responsibility of every scientist.

Gorky. March 24, 1981

p.s. After this letter was written, I received word of the tragic death of Juri Kukk in a labor camp. Tatiana Osipova was sentenced to five years labor camp and five years internal exile on April 2.

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ANDREI SAKHAROV: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

I was born on May 21, 1921, in Moscow. My father was a well-known physics teacher and the author of textbooks and popular science books. My childhood was spent in a large communal apartment where most rooms were occupied by our relatives with only a few outsiders mixed in. Our home preserved the traditional atmosphere of a numerous and close family—respect for hard work and ability, mutual aid, love for literature and science. My father played the piano well; his favorites were Chopin, Grieg, Beethoven, and Scriabin. During the Civil War he earned a living by playing the piano in a silent movie theatre. I recall with particular fondness Maria Petrovna, my grandmother and the soul of our family, who died before World War II at the age of seventy-nine. Family influences were especially strong in my case because I received my early schooling at home and then had difficulty relating to my own age group.

After graduating high school with honors in 1938, I enrolled in the Physics Department of Moscow University. When war began, our classes were evacuated to Ashkhabad where I graduated with honors in 1942. That summer I was assigned work for several weeks in Kovrov, and then I was employed on a logging operation in a remote settlement near Melekess. My first vivid impression of the life of workers and peasants dates from that difficult summer of 1942. In September I was sent to a large arms factory on the Volga, where I worked as an engineer until 1945.

I developed several inventions to improve inspection procedures at that factory. (In my university years I did not manage to engage in original scientific work.) While still at the factory in 1944, I wrote several articles on theoretical physics which I sent to Moscow for review. Those first articles have never been published, but they gave me the confidence in my powers which is essential for a scientist.

In 1945 I became a graduate student at the Lebedev Institute of Physics. My advisor, the outstanding theoretical physicist, Igor Tamm, who later became a member of the Academy of Sciences and a Nobel laureate, greatly influenced my career. In 1948 I was included in Tamm's research group which developed a thermonuclear weapon. I spent the next twenty years continuously working in con-

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ditions of extraordinary tension and secrecy, at first in Moscow and then in a special research center. We were all convinced of the vital importance of our work for establishing a worldwide military equilibrium, and we were attracted by its scope.

In 1950 I collaborated with Igor Tamm in some of the first research on controlled thermonuclear reactions. We proposed principles for the magnetic thermal isolation of plasma. I also suggested as an immediate technical objective the use of a thermonuclear reactor to produce fissionable materials as fuel for atomic power plants. Research on controlled thermonuclear reactions is now receiving priority everywhere. The Tokomak system which is under intensive study in many countries, is most closely related to our early ideas.

In 1952 I initiated experimental work on magnetic-explosive generators (devices to transform the energy of a chemical or nuclear explosion into the energy of a magnetic field). A record magnetic field of 25,000,000 gauss was achieved during these experiments in 1964.

In 1953 I was elected a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

My social and political views underwent a major evolution over the fifteen years from 1953 to 1968. In particular, my role in the development of thermonuclear weapons from 1953 to 1962, and in the preparation and execution of thermonuclear tests, led to an increased awareness of the moral problems engendered by such activities. In the late 1950s I began a campaign to halt or to limit the testing of nuclear weapons. This brought me into conflict first with Nikita Khrushchev in 1961, and then with the Minister of Medium Machine Building, Efim Slavsky, in 1962. I helped to promote the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. From 1964 when I spoke out on problems of biology, and especially from 1967, I have been interested in an ever-expanding circle of questions. In 1967 I joined the Committee for Lake Baikal. My first appeals for victims of repression date from 1966-67.

The time came in 1968 for the more detailed, public and candid statement of my views contained in the essay "Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom." These same ideas were echoed seven years later in the title of my Nobel lecture: "Peace, Progress and Human Rights." I consider the themes of fundamental importance and closely interconnected. My 1968 essay was a turning point in my life. It quickly gained worldwide publicity. The Soviet press was

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silent for some time, and then began to refer to the essay very negatively. Many critics, even sympathetic ones, considered my ideas naive and impractical. But thirteen years later, it seems to me that these ideas foreshadowed important new directions in world and Soviet politics.

After 1970, the defense of human rights and of victims of political repression became my first concern. My collaboration with Valery Chalidze and Andrei Tverdokhlebov, and later with Igor Shafarevich and Grigory Podyapolsky, on the Moscow Human Rights Committee was one expression of that concern. (Podyapolsky's untimely death in March 1976 was a tragedy.)

After my essay was published abroad in July 1968, I was barred from secret work and excommunicated from many privileges of the Soviet establishment. The pressure on me, my family, and friends increased in 1972, but as I came to learn more about the spreading repressions, I felt obliged to speak out in defense of some victim almost daily. In recent years I have continued to speak out as well on peace and disarmament, on freedom of contacts, movement, information and opinion, against capital punishment, on protection of the environment, and on nuclear power plants.

In 1975 I was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This was a great honor for me as well as recognition for the entire human rights movement in the USSR. In January 1980 I was deprived of all my official Soviet awards (the order of Lenin, three times Hero of Socialist Labor, the Lenin Prize, the State Prize) and banished to Gorky where I am virtually isolated and watched day and night by a policeman at my door. The regime's action lacks any legal basis. It is one more example of the intensified political repression gripping our country in recent years.

Since the summer of 1969 I have been a senior scientist at the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Physics. My current scientific interests are elementary particles, gravitation, and cosmology.

I am not a professional politician. Perhaps that is why I am always bothered by questions concerning the usefulness and eventual results of my actions. I am inclined to believe that moral criteria together with uninhibited thought provide the only possible compass for these complex and contradictory problems. I shall refrain from specific predictions, but today as always I believe in the power of reason and the human spirit.

Gorky, March 24, 1981

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FICTION

Amos Oz*

THE AUTHOR ENCOUNTERS HIS READING PUBLIC

These are the principal questions: Why do you write. What is your driving urge. And why do you write the way you do. What is the function of your writing and what does it achieve. Why do you concentrate so much on the negative aspects and why are your stories always so gloomy. What are you really trying to say. Why did you come along here this evening.

There are polite answers and there are clever answers, but there is no simple, straightforward answer.

Consequently the author lingers in a dingy side street cafe, and tries to concentrate for a little while on these questions. In vain a waitress in a grubby overall tries to wipe the tabletop clean for him: the surface remains sticky. Meanwhile the writer is assailed by the smell of her sweat, a smell of weary womanhood. She notices him eyeing her breasts, her hips, her legs, and gives a snort of naked disgust. Like a cry of despair: A thousand times you've all looked at me like that and a thousand times I've said to you, that's enough, what's the matter with you, a thousand times you've done this and this and this to me and still you haven't had enough, but I can't stand it anymore leave me alone for once let me be you're crazy I've had enough I'm sick and tired of it I tell you.

Politely therefore the writer averts his gaze. He orders an omelette, a roll and a cup of coffee. He extracts a cigarette from his pocket and holds it secreted in his left hand which is propping up his cheek: a thoughtful expression hinting at secret ruminations.

At a nearby table two men are sitting unhurriedly, both about fifty. The principal man is heavily built, tough-looking, and totally

*The following four stories were translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange.

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bald. He looks like a gangster's stooge in a film. The smaller man looks shabby and worn, his manner is excitable, his face suggests that he will bestow admiration or compassion on anyone who needs it without further reflection. The writer supposes that he is a small businessman, perhaps an agent for a firm of washing machine distributors. They are apparently discussing success, in a general sort of way. The gangsters' stooge is saying:

"And anyway, by the time you've made anything of your life it's all over."

The other replies:

"You're absolutely right Mr. Baghdadi, I agree with you a hundred percent. But you must admit that there's more to life than just *living—a man needs to do something for his soul as well. It stands to* reason."

"What you are saying," the principal actor remarks frostily, "sounds to me too much like propaganda. Can you give me an example from real life, so that we know what you're talking about."

"Alright why not," the little man concurs. "Take Ovadia Hazzam for instance. You know him, he works for Isratex. He divorced his wife, played around, took out fantastic loans, took no notice of anyone, he even joined the National Religious Party, he lived like a king. Not just like a king, like a lord, even. In the end he caught cancer of the liver and now he's hospitalized in a very critical condition."

and replies indifferently:

"Sure. What do you mean do I know him. Poor sod. But I wouldn't use him as an example if I were you. Everybody knows that cancer doesn't come from loose living. Scientists have proved now that it comes from dirt. They even had a professor explaining it on the radio the other day. You're talking nonsense if you don't mind me saying so, Cohen. Ovadia Hazzam is just plain irrelevant. Leave him alone and get back to the matter in hand."

The author glances at his watch. He gets up, pays the irritable waitress and thanks her politely for the change. He makes for the door, changes his mind and goes down two steps into the stinking lavatory. The burnt-out lightbulb, peeling plaster and stench of old urine in the darkness remind him that he is not really ready for the meeting and how will he answer the questions.

As he goes out into the street he lights a cigarette. Twenty past nine. It is a warm humid summer evening and petrol fumes hang heavy on the air. There is no breeze. It seems a terrible thing to the

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writer to be lying incurably ill between sweaty sheets on a night like this. In vain have all the windows of the auditorium been opened wide: the bad air solidly refuses to stir. The audience is perspiring. People are greeting acquaintances and sitting down tiredly on hard chairs, youngsters all together, old folk in little groups apart, their clothes sticking to their bodies, each with his own smell and the smell of his neighbor in the fetid air. Meanwhile they exchange opinions about the latest news and the general situation. In vain three ancient fans revolve listlessly above the audience's head: they bring no relief. It is very warm. Insects force their way between collar and neck, as though this were tropical Africa. Outside two streets away sounds the rise and fall and plaintive rise of an ambulance siren or a fire engine. Will the author bring us some new message tonight, will he be able to explain to us how we got into this condition or what we must do to escape from its clutches? Can he see something that is invisible to us? Will he come and tell us about it?

Some have come armed with a copy of the book which is the subject of this evening's meeting, and for the time being they are using it—or the evening paper—as a fan. In vain. We're already late in starting and there's still no sign of him. But anyway there's nothing on the television tonight except a boring quiz. While here the program includes opening remarks by a well-known literary expert, a reading of excerpts from the work itself, a talk by the author, questions, discussion, answers, and closing remarks. Admission is free, and the author has aroused, as is well known, a certain public curiosity.

And now at last here he is.

For the last half hour the local cultural enthusiast has been waiting for him outside, at the foot of the steps, a red-faced balding man twice the author's age, whose cheeks are alarmingly crisscrossed with blue veins but whose soul is still bursting as ever with charm and eager social concern. Immediately he sets to work forging a bond of affection and cheerful respect with the author, a kind of jolly intimacy: after all are we not two priests of the intellect both devoted to the very same ideal, and they are all sitting out there waiting to hear what we shall say. Well well well, welcome my friend. You're a little late. It doesn't matter. Everyone's always late here. How are you? We were beginning to think that the muse had driven us out of your mind. But we didn't give you up, my friend. Not us. We're very stubborn.

The author responds by muttering a feeble witticism: Surely

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you could have started without me.

"Ha ha, start without you, that's a good one," the cultural enthusiast gives a Russian laugh. "Yes, and you could have started without us somewhere else. By the way," he asks as they are still panting up the steps, "what do you think that fox Kissinger is going to get out of the Russians? Will he achieve anything?"

And he answers his own question:

"No, he won't get anything out of them. Only more trouble for us. Squash or lemonade or something fizzy? Don't worry. Something fizzy for you. That's perfectly alright."

So they both enter the hall.

A hurried whisper runs round the audience. Perhaps because the author is wearing plain khaki trousers, a blue sports shirt and sandals. He doesn't look the least bit like an artist, they are saying, but people say that as a person he's really very nice, they are saying, and look what complicated stories he writes. You can never tell from appearances. Anyway, he looks completely different in his pictures.

The author is placed in the middle, between Ruchele Reznik and the literary expert. They shake hands. The cultural enthusiast opens the proceedings. He requests silence. He apologizes for the delay. He makes a vain attempt, with forced gaiety, to win the audience's sympathy. He even repeats publicly the stupid joke made by the author as they were on their way in: Our guest was surprised to find that we had not started without him, but, after all, for a wedding you need a groom as well as a bride, as Mataniah Starkman puts it in one of his poems. Well, with your permission, I shall now declare this evening's program open. Good evening.

The author, listening to this decides not to smile. He lights a fresh cigarette. He looks thoughtful and even a little sad. The whole audience has eyes only for him, and he, with a refined, faraway look, fixes his eyes deliberately on a picture of the Labour Zionist leader Berl Katznelson on the opposite wall.

Berl Katznelson has a look of kindly cunning on his face, as though he has just this minute succeeded in achieving some fine and noble end by slightly devious means known only to himself. Today he is a king, the author thinks to himself. Not just a king, a lord.

And so, after a slight delay, there finally appears round the author's lips a fine smile which the audience was already expecting while the opening words were being spoken.

At that instant he thinks he catches a kind of titter passing around the hall, and he glances hastily at the zipper of his trousers.

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But everything is in order. Nobody has snickered. He must have been mistaken. He rests his elbows on the table, leans his chin on his fists, and adopts an air of profundity and humility as the literary expert rises to his feet and in rhetorical tones draws comparisons and parallels, lays bare tangled webs of hidden motifs, indicates the literary artifices employed by the author, casts doubt on the legitimacy of a certain artistic device, without denying the essential relevance of the ironic dimension of the work, etc., until he finally arrives at the problem of the inner meaning. In vain. By now the author is fully immersed in his masquerade: he has stopped listening and is sending acquisitive glances round the hall, snatching here a wry or oafish expression, there a fine pair of crossed legs, a distinguished mop of gray hair, a look of rapt attention, body odors on the close air. As though he were rifling their handbags while they are absorbed in the secrets of his art as expounded by the literary expert. Opposite him, for example, with her thick legs spaced well apart, sits a broad middle-aged woman, who has long since abandoned all efforts and diets, renounced her femininity, her body is soft and swollen like an overripe tomato but she has long given up worrying about appearances and ascended to higher spheres, her eyes are fixed now on the celebrated author and her face is set in an expression of supreme cultural rapture. Right behind her is a pleasant-looking lad of sixteen or so, probably a secret poet, his complexion disfigured with acne. A passionate ravenous youth, with curly, dusty-looking hair, eyeing the author through his glasses from the depths of his being with a tortured secret love, your soul is my soul your sufferings are my sufferings you and only you can understand I am the enchanted soul in your stories. From him the author's glance roams to the furious figure of a man with a Labour Party look, probably a senior teacher, forceful and ideal-ridden, in a state school in a well-to-do suburb, perhaps even a deputy headmaster. He has probably come along with the single aim of stating once and for all his adverse judgment on the emerging Hebrew literature which lacks absolutely everything which we need and contains what we have no need of whatsoever.

The author decides to attach to this character the name of Dr. Pesah Yikhat. The waitress from the cafe will be Jacqueline. Messrs. Baghdadi and Cohen can keep their real names. The youthful poet will be Yuval Deutsch or Yuval Dotan. The culture-thirsty woman will be called Miriam Nehorait. The plot will revolve around a scandal: the woman and the boy. Debauchery, remorse and anger.

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Mortification of the flesh, humiliation of the spirit, the hypocrisy of society and convention, homespun wisdom, ruin, iron of fate. All told perhaps in the first person from the point of view of the shabby culture-fiend, lying awake on solitary sleepless nights in his spartan single-room flat in a block of workers' apartments, scheming how when the day comes he will ruthlessly lay bare the real, the terrible face of life behind all the masks. It may even be possible to incorporate a few traits borrowed from the expert in literature: for instance the half-moon of thin gray hair which crowns his freckled head. His rhetorical delivery, the triumphal tone of a man who has just been attacked with a decisive argument but who, far from giving in, has managed to reply with gentle rage and an argument which is twice as decisive. The author is inclined to allot to this character a marginal role in the action, the part of a sage whom events have proved wrong with unreasonable cruelty.

While these various thoughts are passing through the author's mind, the lecturer comes to his main point, indicating the paradoxical role which is usually played by this author's descriptions of nature. Once again a titter or stifled snigger is heard, which makes the author sweat uneasily in his seat. Disgustedly he lights another cigarette, while the expert concludes his talk with a cunningly ambiguous expression of praise which implies reservations, albeit indirectly.

Now it is Ruchele Reznik's turn to read out two excerpts from the new book. Pretty and nervous, pretty without being attractive, a girl of thirty, old-fashioned, with a single thick plait, wearing an elegant, modest dress printed with a pattern of tiny cyclamens in purple. And she reads as though there were nothing in the book but gentleness and compassion, as though it were about secret yearnings, as though it were the work of a simple sensitive soul seeking to enter similar spirits.

The author is instantly filled with shame and confusion. Why did you come. You should have stayed at home. Shut up safely indoors. What can you say to all these people. Why aren't you an engineer planning railways across difficult terrain, as you dreamed of becoming when you were young. Will falsehood last forever. In a voice transformed by longing Ruchele Reznik is reading from your new book and she is almost a beautiful girl, although she is not attractive.

Among the audience there is a youth—or rather a stiff, lean man of about sixty-five, a strange, angular man, who looks like a

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party hack who has been dismissed from his post because he has divulged classified information to a rival party. Can it really be that he is the wretch who has just uttered, for the third time at least, a sort of titter or stifled snigger? What does it mean, the author asks himself in alarm, is it spite, or petty stupidity, or envy, or contempt, or is this real suffering?

All these are filling the author's heart. And so, when his turn comes to speak, he appears at his best. He replies wittily to the audience's questions. Makes discreet use of examples drawn from real life. Raises doubts. Delicately trounces the literary expert. Occasionally accuses literature in general and his own writing in particular of shady and even in a sense discreditable motives. Expounds to the audience his well-known view that if only our predicament (human, national, historical, personal) is regarded from a standpoint of despair, it becomes possible to face it with a smile. While he is speaking he bitterly regrets having come to the meeting, agreeing to speak, his own inadequacy, his failure to write what he should really have written, his inability to discover who in the audience is secretly laughing at him, the fact that the mockery is actually justified, and his lecherous glances earlier at the tired waitress in the cafe.

All in vain.

He pauses for a moment. He ruffles his hair with his hand. Otherworldliness, loneliness and sorrow display themselves on his face. He continues speaking, twice as falsely as before.

Afterwards he is surrounded by admirers. He rapidly signs a few copies of his latest book. Accepts compliments with a look of humility. Encourages the shy, secretive youth to send him his first attempts at writing poetry. Takes his leave of the chastened literary expert with a warm handshake and a knowing wink. Then he thanks the cultural organizer who is thanking him for agreeing to come. As they go down the steps he devotes a few warm words to Ruchele Reznik alone.

And then he goes on his way.

For an hour or an hour and a half he paces the darkened streets alone. In vain. He smokes three or four more cigarettes, and makes a mental note that he has smoked eight or nine in the course of the evening. Boys and girls pass him with their arms round each other, on their way home to bed from an evening out, silent or laughing aloud, and one of the girls lets out a horrified shriek as though someone has just whispered a particularly outrageous suggestion in her ear. Beside an unfinished building a motionless night watchman

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stands pensively relieving himself. Beyond him there is only a row of streetlamps, an empty pavement, silent walls. And further still the end of the town and the deserted fields. At last you are alone.

On an upturned crate you sit in the dark. You see the shadowy mountains. Stars. There is no breeze. Lift up your eyes and see. At the end of your silence you whisper a plea for pardon. How little that literary expert was demanding, and how arrogantly you denied him even that little. How little was needed to please the cultural organizer who received you so warmly and so self-effacingly. Alone before the mirror in her room Ruchele Reznik is getting undressed now and sadly consoling herself, if only I had breasts my whole life would change for the better. The senior teacher or deputy headmaster was right when he stood up and declared that the function of literature is to provide consolation and encouragement, and that that is precisely where all the modern writers including tonight's speakers have failed miserably. Mataniah Starkman was quite mistaken when he wrote that for a wedding you need a groom as well as a bride. On the contrary, it would be instructive to reflect for a moment on the life of Mr. Ovadia Hazzam for example: he was the man who divorced his wife, led an outrageous life, borrowed enormous amounts of money, threw himself into politics, lived like a lord or a king, and then finally developed cancer of the liver, returned to his former wife, and is now lying sleeplessly in a hot dank hospital corridor dying alone in the dark, perhaps uttering from time to time a stifled chuckle, and this too is in vain. What an insignificant man this writer is, despicable, contemptible, utterly loathsome.

I ought to talk to myself about myself. And if there does come some grace, perhaps it is when I talk about myself to myself that it will happen, and I may produce a good rumor, a gesture of sympathy to the hopeless, a flicker of excitement for the downcast, a partial consolation for some of those tortured souls. Poor Jacqueline. Doctor Pesah Yikhat. Mr. Baghdadi the gangsters' stooge and his shabby sidekick. The young poet Yuval Dotan-Deutsch. The expert in literature. Mrs. Miriam Nehorait. The wretched Ovadia Hazzam. The cultural organizer Yeruham Shdamati and the reader Ruchele Reznik. It's late at night now, time to go to sleep. I must carefully extract the evening newspaper from their tired fingers. I know a bedtime story and I'll tell it to them all to try to help them sleep peacefully if possible and dream peaceful dreams. Berl Katznelson was a kindly, cunning man who knew how to achieve good and desirable

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ends even if by somewhat devious means: our condition here is rotten, strange and painful.

And it is still hot and humid in my room and total darkness holds the whole land. Have you ever heard of an old, modest poet named Mataniah Starkman? He was the poet who made the mistake about the bride and groom. And I have just read in the paper which is by my bed that in the early hours of yesterday morning, in Ra'anannah, at the age of 77, of a heart attack, the poet has died. Surely we are obliged occasionally to do a simple sum. Meanwhile it's three o'clock in the morning.

Good night to all of us.

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GRANDPA ISIDORE

At a quarter past nine on a rainy morning Grandpa Isidore opened his eyes. He had been woken by the sound of brass guns being drawn by horses on squeaking wooden gun carriages. General Shevchenko's troops had returned to the town at last, and were now engaged in crushing the power of the hooligans and driving the armed rabble out into the forests, the muddy villages, the swamps.

The church bells had also been rehung, and were ringing out again. He must get up.

He must get up, get washed, dab on some scent, put on a dark suit as befits a notary public and a silk tie in honor of the impending meeting, pick up his stick, put on a hat, arm himself with some useful documents, and take the precaution of secreting a neatly wrapped bottle of vodka in his overcoat pocket. On the way to the town hall he must collect the *Parnas* and the *Gubbay* from their homes and then appear with the utmost politeness before the General at the head of this humble but experienced deputation representing the whole Jewish community: it is time to resume the old understanding. Time to renew the community's contacts with the legal government on a basis of calculation and reciprocal politeness. Time is pressing. He must be up and doing.

Meanwhile the strong horses harnessed to the brass guns have passed and gone. Now they will be down by the water, firing across the river, perhaps they have already set fire to the great forest opposite. Must get up.

Painfully he turns over from his back to his side. He thrusts aside the heavy blanket. His bare feet grope for the slippers like a pair of blind beggars. One is found, the other, maddeningly, seems to be hiding. The furrowed hand clasps the stainless steel handle which his grandchildren have taken the trouble to fix to the wall beside his bed. After a struggle involving every bone in his body he stands up, with one foot still bare, and begins to wrestle with the buttons of the brightly patterned pajamas which his great-niece has brought him back as a present from London. All night long the radio which he has forgotten to switch off has spoken and sung and twittered and screeched. Now a loose young woman is trying to persuade him in a seductive whisper only to use the Most Caressing

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Soap. A furious tug on the cord, the plug is pulled out, and the trollop is forced to shut up.

There is a lingering darkness now in the world, or else only in the room, or perhaps only inside his eyes which are a dulled blue like water in a fog. As he feels for the switch of the electric fire his lips will mutter: *S'is gurnisht. Sha. Shtil. Geendikt.* The thunderstorm outside has abated. He shuffles over to the window, pulls open the curtains with feeble rage and looks out at the street in the rain. February in Jerusalem. The rain is heavy and steady. An occasional burst of low thunder comes back like a beaten warrior. Along the pavement a procession of drenched dustbins; one of them has been upset by the wind and has spilled a mass of rainsoaked newspapers which cling to the railings. Bare trees dripping. A gray half-light and tatters of mist caught on tiled roofs and low stone walls. Over the road a derelict plot full of thistles, cluttered with rusting scrap iron, lashed by the rain. In front of it is a huge sign in three languages: On this site will be erected the Center for the Promotion of Brotherhood sponsored by the Jewish Community of Montreal and the Eisenstadt family. Eisenstadt, Grandpa Isidore grumbles with disgust and loathing, but these too pass and are gone. A woman in a raincoat trips lightly across the street and disappears. A dark motor makes its way towards Talpiyot or Rachel's Tomb. The strong horses and the gun carriages have receded far into the distance while in Jerusalem the heavy steady rain keeps falling. Now Grandpa Isidore is shivering in the overheated room. Gone are the calculations and the reciprocal politeness. He is alone as usual. A furious, infuriating man was Shneur Zalman Rubashov, alias President Shazar, and he too has passed away. There is nothing left. The old understanding will never be resumed. He was an antisemite, a bloodthirsty pogrom-maker, a fool and a confirmed drunkard—General Shevchenko, of accursed memory. His bones have long since rotted under the snow. And the bones of the worthy Halberstamm and Zondel the *Gubbay*, may God avenge their martyred blood and have mercy on their pure souls. Halberstamm was no saint and Zondel talked too much and never knew when to be quiet and which of the three of us was deemed worthy to see Jerusalem and only this endless rain. *Geendikt.* Only because he has become hard of hearing he will not hear Mathilda Azikri come in in her blue apron to put the breakfast down on his bedside table and to say good morning. He will not touch his breakfast this morning in any case. The brass guns on the riverbank are firing mercilessly at the great forest across the water and the

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horses are rearing on their hind legs at the smell of fire and smoke. He will leave the window, draw the curtains to shut out the beating rain, and turn on the radio again to hear why the nations rage; and if he realizes that the sign is still delayed he will climb furiously back into bed and wrap himself up in the heavy blanket again because his knees hurt and the light in the world, in his eyes or in the room, is so very feeble. *S'is gurnisht*. He will close his eyes, place his spectacles carefully on the bedside table, and slowly sink into his thoughts.

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THE THING THAT HATH BEEN

After the rains, after the fog and the hail, a bright clear Saturday suddenly broke on Jerusalem. Early in the morning the surviving birds started to chatter excitedly among themselves about the new state of affairs. Aunt Natalia, who had come to Jerusalem to take my mother's place, gathered the breakfast dishes into the sink and told Father to get out of the kitchen, to forget his worries and relax outside in the sun. She was a tough, cheery woman, with the manners of a pioneer. In the good old days she had worked on road-building and in the stone quarries in the mountains of Galilee. Then she had succumbed to pneumonia and a wild infatuation for a well-known poet, but neither of these afflictions had broken her spirit. After she recovered she ran a workers' canteen in one of the settlements in Sharon. She had a broad, sunburnt face with a constant expression of idealism blended with brisk affection. At that time, in February 1947, my mother was staying in a Health Service sanatorium, recovering from attacks of migraine and the rigors of life in general. Everyone was talking about a decisive national effort, a fateful test facing the Hebrew community in the near future. Meanwhile Father immersed himself in his research; his manner at that time was mild and distracted, as though he were constantly afraid of a dazzling light or distastefully loud noise. He said:

"If you need any help. . ."

And Aunt Natalia:

"Don't talk nonsense, Professor. Better you should take a book and go and sit outside in the sun, you're as white as a sheet. And the child can play in the yard or on the balcony, anywhere except under my feet, and I'll quickly fix something for lunch and then we'll all go for a walk. Who knows when we'll have another Saturday like this in the middle of the winter. Get along with you."

The morning light was a dense blue and every bit of metal reflected a hazy glow as if it were honey. A Saturday between the rains when one could look back to the lights of the festival of Hanukkah and forward to the spring celebrations of Tu Bishvat, when in the distance one could see the Mediterranean on one side and on the other the mountains of Moab beyond the Dead Sea, the minarets of Ramallah and the Arab villages on the mountainside, the coastal

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plain and Sharon through the blue-tinged honey haze, a light of stones, a biblical light in which anything was possible and everything was within reach. The Land of Ammon, for instance, was not in the distance this morning but rising up at the very end of Zephaniah Street. In all our backyards, bathed and bare, stood mulberry and fig trees, pomegranates and vines, because the suburb of Kerem Avraham was built within an old orchard. There was an invisible breeze from the sea, and a sea smell wafting on the air from time to time. Above the tiled roofs of the Bokharian Quarter a solitary kite was set deep in the heart of the sky, very bold and high, recalling the flying snake, the twisted serpent, that we had learned about in Bible lessons at school.

Jephthah is a small boy for his years. His freshly-washed hair smells sweet and his hands are delicate like a girl's. From the rooftop he scans the horizon, planning in his mind's eye a magnificent adventure: with a small band of stouthearted seamen he will sail away to the shores to Guadeloupe, and after the passage of many years he will return from his travels with an air of cold disdain and present to the newly-established Hebrew state the Golden Isles which he has discovered and conquered far away in the south of the globe. Chaim Weizmann himself will say to him, You are peerless, Jephthah, his mother will watch him with tears in her eyes from the front row and his father with a shy smile, and strange girls will melt.

The city lies fresh and open at his feet: each stone in its proper place. In the street little children are playing games and Jephthah from his vantage point forgives them for everything. They are not destined for doughty deeds and so they can play to their hearts' content while he concentrates on planning the details of his voyage. A stupid bowlegged dog in the Slouschz family's backyard is barking away without anger, as though he is simply discharging his duty. Daddy is sitting in an armchair in the yard with his books and papers on his lap, probably reading about the history of the Jews in Poland, probably making notes in pencil in the margins: Here the author is mistaken. Or: There is no evidence for this. Or: That might have been interpreted differently.

On top of a low stone wall an old cat is drowsing inside its fur. There is a foolish bird on the same wall, heedlessly perched within pouncing range of the cat, stubbornly repeating over and over again a sentence of four syllables. But the cat ignores the bird and the blue light and continues to drowse motionlessly, as though the whole of Jerusalem is far beneath its dignity. As for the religious neighbors

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they are pouring calmly out of the Faithful Remnant Synagogue, the service over, and their light-struck children are bawling and shouting in Yiddish. All this activity proceeds under the indifferent gaze of three off-duty New Zealand soldiers, sunning themselves with outstretched legs on a municipal bench opposite the courtyard of the synagogue. They appear to be engaged in a quiet conversation. There is calm. Aunt Natalia has opened all the windows in the flat to banish the smells of winter and to let in the fresh air.

So Jephthah comes down from the roof and decides to set out on his voyage.

In the kitchen Aunt Natalia is preparing lunch. "You," she says, "just you get out of here and don't start getting in my way all day. Better you should go and play outside in the sunshine."

But the captain does not hear. Squeezed into a cardboard box, with the handle of the floormop as a mast fitted with newspaper sails and a blue-and-white flag, he sails towards the kitchen, to the foggy sea-lanes, to the front balcony by way of the Gulf of Crocodiles in the long low passage, and onwards to the back room and Daddy's bookshelves where the dark space between the books and the wall is waiting for him with a thousand eyes.

Aunt Natalia is crossing and recrossing the tiny kitchen with firm footsteps, as though it really requires an iron will and stout-hearted resolve to traverse safely the expanse between sink and kitchen dresser. Her lips are set in an expression of sorrowful certainty: I am discharging my duty, while as for you, moods, little weaknesses, migraines, all kinds of psychological states, I have to understand all this and forgive it, because anyway, there are people and people.

She chops onions, as though felling a forest. She peels potatoes with a mixture of pathos and restrained contempt. She divides a chicken into five precisely equal portions. She grates carrots. And all the time she keeps a watchful eye on the lentil soup which is stewing in a soot-blackened saucepan, and which is not permitted to be thicker or thinner than taste and principles permit: everything, great or small, has to be done properly.

"Outside with you. I've told you before. What's this, something new, standing there staring like a little Casanova?"

So the vessel makes a detour to avoid the enemy destroyers lying in ambush and is caught in a local storm in the straits strewn with rocks and reefs but still undeterred her sharp prow thrusts ever onward. Salvos from her guns sink the dugout canoes from which natives smeared with war paint are shooting arrows smeared with

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poison. And thence to the turbulent shallows swarming with ravenous sharks off the shores of the Polynesian islands, and onward, the Hebrew flag forges ahead into the heart of the burning archipelago to islands of virgin forest where no white man has yet set foot. Several times she seems about to be smashed like a nutshell against the black rock-walls, but the skipper steers her with an iron hand to the Coast of Skulls. And here is the landfall, the onslaught, the final battle, and all alone he calmly takes on the hordes of screaming savages until the polished spear pierces his chest and at the foot of the coat-rack at the end of the passage he collapses, dying. Jephthah expires with the word Jerusalem on his lips, willingly accepting this death in the sight of all his foes and those who have mocked him, parents, teachers and friends: none of them have understood anything. They have never understood. Now they will learn, and be put to shame. In the midst of his triumph his eyelids part and his eyes dim: on her way to the vegetable box she is stepping over his corpse. "Out of the way, stupid," she mutters, affording him a momentary glimpse of garter and corset, a terrifying pink landscape, and then she is gone, while the hero lies on his back unmasked, his hand in his pocket burning his knees trembling a thread of dribble trailing on his chin, panting and gasping, and he retreats to the bathroom.

Here he stays for a quarter of an hour, washed and despondent, trying to dry himself. "Outlook bleak" is the gist of what he says to himself, and these are the words he inscribes with his fingertip on the steamy mirror. Wipe them out. Then: I want to die. Wipe out again. And emerge subdued.

"We should still keep on trying to talk rationally with the Arabs," Father says over lunch.

"For every bomb of theirs we should throw ten at them," replies Aunt Natalia. "Then maybe they'll begin to think rationally, Professor. Jephthah, either you sit up and eat properly or you can go straight to hell, spoiled brat."

"Never mind," says Father cravenly. "If he doesn't want to eat, we mustn't force him. And we really should go for a little walk in Tel Arza woods, it's so nice out."

At this moment Jephthah suddenly begins to feel compassion for his mother who doesn't have the strength to stand it and for Aunt Natalia who has not found and never will find a boy who will marry her, and for Daddy who teaches Hebrew grammar in an elementary school and will never ever be a professor because the antisemites drove him out of the university in Poland and now it's too late. He

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feels sorry for the religious neighbors, for the three New Zealand soldiers, who knows if or when they will ever see their distant home again, for the Arabs who don't think rationally. Anyway, by the time Aunt Natalia has finished washing up and Daddy has finished drying the dishes the blue light will have vanished and the winter clouds will have appeared again. By three o'clock the rain will be pouring down and it will go on raining all through the evening and all night long almost without a break. The cardboard boat will have to be destroyed and the mast snapped in half. There is no archipelago. When the Hebrew state is finally set up it will not be he who will conquer the Golden Isles far away in the south of the globe and present them to it. He will grow up and be thus and thus. Jotapata and Masada, captured Beitar, their ruins will continue to be rainswept each winter. Aunt Natalia will die of a malignant tumor in her womb and she will leave him in her will half an acre of land on the edge of the settlement of Pardes Hannah, a wickerwork chair, a curious old china dinner service, a brown glass-fronted cabinet full of yellowing Russian novels and a pretty lambskin rug which lies next to his bed to this day. Here the author is mistaken. There is no evidence for this. That might have been interpreted differently. Such are the pencil notes which Father has left behind him in the margins of the *History of the Jews in Poland.* Their love, their hatred, their envy is now perished, but truly the light is still sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. And so sometimes towards evening he will stand alone at the window and watch an old cat drowsing on the wall on a winter's day while a foolish bird perched on the same wall, apparently out of its mind, repeats interminably a sentence of four syllables. That is the way things are.

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AWAKENING

I have a natural lookout post on the slope of a hill, in a comfortable niche among the basalt rocks, from which I command an excellent view of the orchard, the plain, the hillside opposite and the mouth of the wadi. I have clear orders to open fire on the last of the Syrian commandos who are still lurking in the area. The air is hot and dusty, wafting towards me a slight smell of scorched thistles and stale excrement. With my powerful binoculars I systematically survey first the hillside, then the mouth of the wadi, then the orchard and then the mouth of the wadi again. I am especially anxious about the mouth of the wadi. But everything is quiet and empty. Only the bluebottles keep pestering me, so that I am compelled to toss my head, change my position, look round, my blood freezes: right behind me, four or five paces away, a Syrian commando is standing quietly, smiling at me with a look of sly innocence, like a spoiled child, as if to say:

There, you see, I've made it.

Oh sir, I decide angrily, that's what you think. Your upraised hands are clenched, and who knows what you are hiding in them or what you are up to. Besides, I have my clear orders.

Afterwards I have to approach the corpse, turn it over with the toe of my boot, search for some momento, documents, a photograph, so that I shall not forget you in years to come. But there is no need: I shall not forget you. Mop of fair hair. High forehead and strong chin. And a cluster of tiny wrinkles at the corners of your eyes. I must return to my comfortable niche and continue to survey the mouth of the wadi. I cover your head with a bit of old sacking, and jump up with a start. It is three o'clock in the morning. Barefoot and drenched in sweat I get out of bed and cross the room. I sit down at the window without switching on the light and look out into the deep darkness, listening even with my skin. Hills outlined in the moonlight. Cypresses outlined in the garden. Frogs, crickets, and a light breeze blowing. In the distance the water pump is throbbing. All as usual. There is nothing new. Everything is as it was. The old timers, it would seem, came to the very same conclusion by an entirely different route.

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Daniel Bell

FIRST LOVE AND EARLY SORROWS

In 1932, at age thirteen, I joined the Young People's Socialist League, commonly known as the Yipsels, the youth division of the Socialist party. I had grown up in the slums of New York. My mother had worked in a garment factory as long as I could remember; my father had died when I was an infant. All around me I saw the "Hoovervilles," the tin shacks near the docks of the East River where the unemployed lived in makeshift houses and rummaged through the garbage scows for food. Late at night I would go with a gang of other boys to the wholesale vegetable markets on the West Side, to swipe potatoes or to pick up bruised tomatoes in the street to bring home, or to eat around the small fires we would make in the street with the broken boxes from the markets. I wanted to know, simply, why this had to be. It was inevitable that I would become a sociologist.

In the Ottendorfer branch of the New York Public Library I would squat before the 300-numbers section—the sociology books in the Dewey classification system used at the time—thankful not only for the free library but also for the open access to the stacks, which allowed me to browse at will, reading Robert Hunter on *Poverty* or Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*. On the weekends, I would go to the Socialist Sunday School and study Fred Henderson's *The Case for Socialism* and Algernon Lee's *The Essential Marx*. Twice a week, in the evenings, I would go to the Rand School of Social Science on Fifteenth Street to attend a reading group on Marx's *Capital*—the text, however, was an abridgement by a man named Borchardt (as I recall it), and had been edited by Max Eastman—and even to attend a course on "Dialectical Materialism." In that course I learned that ordinary materialism saw events in simple cause-and-effect terms, such as a stone falling from a ledge and hitting someone on the head, whereas dialectical materialism looked for the causes in the wider natural and social contexts, so that one should understand that the stone fell because there had been erosion of the soil and the soil was eroded because of the exploitation of the land. I was impressed. I was thirteen years old.

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Like many of the active Yipsels at the time, I was tempted by the Communist movement. John Dos Passos at the time had remarked that joining the Socialist party was like drinking "near beer," the weak, almost nonalcoholic beer that was allowed at that time under Prohibition. (In later years, Dos Passos became a "reformed drunk," and sometimes acted like one.) The victory of Hitler, and the quick destruction of the powerful Social Democratic movement, gave one the sense that it was, indeed, the final conflict, and each must stand in his place. Many of my comrades did join the Young Communist League; a few, more sophisticated, became Trotskyites. I was torn between the two.

I spoke of this to some Anarchist relatives, cousins of my mother, a Russian-Jewish couple who lived in Mohegan Colony, a radical settlement fifty miles from New York, where I would spend a week or two in the summer after finishing my job in the garment district, where I used to push the heavy dress trucks through the streets and give out organizing leaflets for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. That I had become a Socialist they did not mind. That I should think of becoming a Communist or a Trotskyite horrified them. They took me to see Rudolf Rocker, the venerable Anarchist leader, an imposing and portly man with a large square head and imposing brush of gray hair, who then lived in the Colony. Rocker said simply that the Bolsheviks—I was struck at the time, and recall almost a half-century later, that he never called them Communists but Bolsheviks—had seized power in the name of the people, using Anarchist slogans such as land to the people; that the soviets, the workers' and soldiers' councils, were spontaneous movements which proved the truth of the Anarchist judgments, but that the Bolsheviks had taken over and destroyed the soviets. In parting, he gave me a number of Anarchist pamphlets, by Malatesta, by Kropotkin (on the Paris Commune), and in particular two pamphlets by Alexander Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy* and *The Kronstadt Rebellion*, pamphlets in English but "set up and printed for *Der Syndikalist*," Berlin 1922—pamphlets that I have before me as I write (one inscribed in a large round hand, "with fraternal greetings, A.B.")—and he suggested that I read Berkman's *The Bolshevik Myth*, the diary of his years in Russia, 1920-1922, a copy of which I soon found, and still have.

Every radical generation, it is said, has its Kronstadt. For some it was the Moscow Trials, for others the Nazi-Soviet Pact, for still others Hungary (the Rajk Trial or 1956), Czechoslovakia (the defen-

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estration of Masryk in 1948 or the Prague Spring of 1968), the Gulag, Cambodia, Poland (and there will be more to come). My Kronstadt was Kronstadt.

Alexander Berkman was a Russian-born Anarchist who had served fourteen years in prison for shooting Henry Clay Frick, the manager of the Carnegie Steel Works, during the bloody strike at Homestead in 1892, and had written the beautiful and eloquent book, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*. In 1917, he and his companion Emma Goldman were arrested after the outbreak of the war, served time in prison and, in 1919, were deported to Russia. Emma Goldman, in fact, had written a pamphlet just before going to prison for two years, entitled *The Truth About the Boylsheviki* (*sic*!) in which she hailed the "libertarian plans" and the "incorruptible integrity" of Lenin and Trotsky, "these great figures of the Revolution."

I wish it were possible to reprint in full the twelve pages of Berkman's diary in Petrograd, from the end of February through mid-March 1921, for no bare summary can convey the immediacy, tension, and drama as the sailors from the First and Second squadrons of the Baltic Fleet at Kronstadt, the men from the naval base at Petrograd who had catalyzed the October days in 1917, now appealed, following the spontaneous strikes of workers in Petrograd and Moscow, for the establishment of freedom of speech and press "for workers and peasants, for Anarchist and left Socialist parties," for the liberation of "all political prisoners of Socialist parties," to "equalize the rations of all who work," etc.

For Trotsky, who was Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Soviet, this was *mvatezh*, or mutiny. He demanded that the sailors surrender or "I'll shoot you like pheasants." The last three entries of Berkman's diaries tell of the sorry end:

> March 7.—Distant rumbling reaches my ears as I cross the Nevsky. It sounds again, stronger and nearer, as if rolling towards me. All at once I realize that artillery is being fired. It is 6 P.M. Kronstadt has been attacked!...
>
> March 17.—Kronstadt has fallen today. Thousands of sailors and workers lie dead in its streets. Summary execution of prisoners and hostages continues.
>
> March 18.—The victors are celebrating the anniversary of the Commune of 1871. Trotsky and Zinoviev denounce Thiers and Gallifet for the slaughter of the Paris rebels....

I remained a Socialist and moved to the right wing of the party.

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The emotional shock in reading about Kronstadt was reinforced by the factual details about the Communist cooperation with the Nazis in Berlin in 1932, the dreadful theory of "social fascism," in which the Comintern proclaimed that not the Nazis, but the Social Democrats, were the primary enemies of the Communists. Added to this were the appalling scenes in February 1934, when the Socialist party held a huge meeting in Madison Square Garden in New York to demonstrate solidarity with the Austrian Socialists (who had risen in armed conflict against the Heimwehr of Dollfuss), only to have that meeting violently disrupted by the Communists, who were literally carrying out, in action, the theory of social fascism.

All this, and more, is history. But it is not the history of the "victors." And being the "victors" does not explain the recurrent appeal of communism, long after the events of Kronstadt were repeated again and again. The explanation—following the repeated disillusionments—has been given many times, and recently most vividly and convincingly by Jorge Semprún in *The Autobiography of Frederico Sánchez,* the experiences of a Communist intellectual told in novelistic form. Semprún joined the Spanish Communist Party-in-exile in 1947. Had he not known of the shooting of Anarchists in Barcelona, the violent attacks on the quasi-Trotskyist P.O.U.M., the murderous role of the French Communist leader André Marty in ordering the execution of "oppositionists" within the International Brigade, the sinister role of the G.P.U.? No matter. "When all is said and done," Semprún writes about his alter ego, "the day-to-day aspects of politics have always bored you; politics has interested you only as risk and as total commitment." And when, in the autumn of 1952, Semprún read in *L'Humanité* that at the Slansky trial, Josef Frank, the assistant secretary-general of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, had confessed to having worked under Gestapo orders in Buchenwald, a "strange chill ran down his spine," for Frank had been his comrade in Buchenwald, living side by side with him for two years, and he knew "immediately... with that brutal physical certainty that tangible truths bring with them... that the accusation was false." Yet:

> You said nothing, however. Nowhere did you proclaim Frank's innocence, or the falseness of the accusation brought against him. Had you proclaimed that innocence you would no doubt have ended up being expelled from the party. You decided to remain in the party. You preferred living the lie of the accusation against Frank within the party to

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living the truth of his innocence outside the party. Frank was sentenced to and met his death on the gallows.*

While the Semprún memoir appeared in 1977, it was that story, already told by Koestler, Silone, Manès Sperber, and dozens of others one quarter of a century before, and my own living memory of Kronstadt, which made me so receptive, when I read them in 1947, to the final pages of Max Weber's "Politics as a Vocation" (1918). Weber's is the most poignant statement I know of the tensions of ethics and politics, and a stark description of the choices facing the individual who commits himself to politics.

I need not repeat Weber's discussion of the "ethic of responsibility" and the "ethic of ultimate ends," and the corruption inherent in each path if followed to its completion: the loss of principle through the constant compromise of "responsibility," and the zealotry of fanaticism when the ends are used to justify any morally abhorrent means. "One cannot prescribe to anyone," Weber wrote, "whether he should follow an ethic of absolute ends or an ethic of responsibility, or when the one and when the other." Weber understood, given the storms of his own life from 1910 to 1920, the ethical dilemmas and the ethical paradoxes of these choices. In his later years, when erotic impulses had broken through some deep repressions, Weber was drawn to the romantic currents of the time. Yet by upbringing, by social position, and ultimately by temperament, he followed the ethic of responsibility. In the unspoken dialogue with Nietzsche that runs like a scarlet thread through his later work on religion and politics, Weber is saying: Yes, I, too, would like to go to the mountain top, like Zarathustra, to stand on Pisgah; but if I go, who would there be to "mind the store," to take care of the humdrum, prosaic tasks of the mundane world?

As Weber knew, after the charismatic eruption there is the dull day after, with the daily round of tasks anew. "Politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards," he wrote. He distrusted most the "sterile excitation" (a phrase from Georg Simmel that he repeated twice in the final pages) of the intellectuals in the "carnival" that is

*Semprún did his penance in writing the screenplay of Artur London's *L'Aveu* (*The Confession*), the story of the Prague trials, which Costa-Gavras made into a film. An earlier work, *La Guerre est Finie*, dealt with his underground forays into Spain. Mr. Semprún was expelled from the Spanish Communist Party in 1964, together with Fernando Claudín, for "revisionist" heresies.

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"decorated" with the name of "revolution." It is a "romanticism of the intellectually interesting," an "emptiness devoid of all feeling of objective responsibility." And he detested the "*Weltanschauungs*-politicians. . . windbags who do not fully realize what they take upon themselves but who intoxicate themselves with romantic sensations."

In my early book, *Marxian Socialism in the United States* (1952), I adopted Weber's framework in an effort to understand radical politics. The Bolshevik, as chiliast or eschatologist, I wrote, is neither *in* nor *of* this world, and therefore takes no moral responsibility for the actions of bourgeois society; he follows an ethic of ultimate ends. The trade-union movement, having to deal with the day-to-day, slow boring of the hard boards, necessarily *is* in and of the world, and follows an ethic of responsibility. The Socialist (and for me Norman Thomas was the exemplar) was *in*, *but not of* the world, and was trapped by his commitment to moral purity and political compromise.

Like Weber—as much for reasons of my own temperament as for the "early sorrows" of politics—I opted for the ethic of responsibility. In his youth, Weber had struggled with the ideas of the early nineteenth-century American Unitarian minister and pacifist, William Ellery Channing, who had influenced Weber's mother's thinking. As he came to reject any ethical absolutisms, he wrote, in a youthful letter: "The matter does not appear to me to be so desperate if one does not ask too exclusively: 'Who is morally right and who is morally wrong?' But if one asks rather: 'Given the existing conflict, how can I solve it with the least internal and external damage for all concerned?' " And this is the view I espoused.

Such a standpoint risks opportunism, yet the principle of compromise in politics is primary because, as Weber insisted, "the decisive means for politics is violence," and those who resort to violence in the belief that such actions are justified have to be prepared as well to accept the consequences, "the diabolic forces lurking in all violence."

Those thoughts, those turbulences, are compressed into the last ten pages of Weber's essay. What stirred me was the way in which, after almost forty pages of didactic and even dry distinctions about party systems and types of political roles, a personal passion had burst through the lecture to end in those tormented, troubled concerns and the final stoical words.

I had long felt that some hidden springs of tension lay behind those last remarks, and the passage that long stayed in my mind,

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and in numerous rereadings of that essay always caused me to stop, was this:

> In the world of realities, as a rule, we encounter the ever-renewed experience that the adherent of an ethic of ultimate ends suddenly turns into a chiliastic prophet. Those, for example, who have just preached 'love against violence' now call for the use of force for the *last* violent deed, which would then lead to a state of affairs in which *all* violence is annihilated. . . . The proponent of an ethic of absolute ends cannot stand up against the ethical irrationality of the world. He is a cosmic-ethical 'rationalist.' Those of you who know Dostoievski will remember the scene of the 'Grand Inquisitor,' where the problem is poignantly unfolded. If one makes any concessions at all to the principle that the end justifies the means, it is not possible to bring an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility under one roof or to decree ethically which end should justify which means.

Weber must have had someone in mind. Who?

Two anguished young men had been members of Weber's Heidelberg circle during World War I, two men whose torments he regarded with sympathy. Both had, from the same impulses, joined revolutionary causes, and both, in their ways, suffered tragic fates.

One was Ernst Toller, the deeply emotional poet and playwright. Sensitive to the anti-Semitism in German universities, Toller had gone to study in Grenoble, but returned to Germany in 1914, voluntarily, to enlist in the army. Invalided at the front in 1916, he suffered a nervous breakdown and, discharged from the army, took up with righteous passion the cause of pacifism. At Weber's Sunday afternoon open house sessions, in the winter of 1917-18, he would read his poems aloud. His listeners, as Marianne Weber reports, were "stirred by the breath of a pure soul that had faith in the original goodness and solidarity of human beings. . . ." Toller gathered around him a group of young men devoted to pacifism and asked Weber to sanction their cause. As Toller writes in his autobiography, *I Was a German*:

> . . . it was to Max Weber that most of the youth of the day turned, profoundly attracted by his intellectual honesty. He loathed political romanticism and bitterly attacked [Max] Maurenbrecher [a leading social reformer who proclaimed the mission of Germany to revitalize Europe] and with him all those German scholars. . . . What is the use, he would say, of finding one's own soul when the nation itself gropes in outer darkness? The German State was an autocracy. . . .

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What Toller wanted was approval of a proclamation which called, among other things, for the rule of Eros in the world and for the abolition of poverty. Weber was aghast "at this confused and unrealistic program" (as Marianne Weber writes), yet when Toller was arrested for agitating for a general strike, Weber requested that he be allowed to testify and he secured Toller's release.

In February 1919, the several Socialist parties of Bavaria, led by Kurt Eisner, combined to proclaim an independent Socialist republic. The famous economist Lujo Brentano and the young Austrian philosopher Otto Neurath were put in charge of a "full socialization" program in order to check the growing Communist movement. They failed, and in April a more radical coalition, in which Toller and the Anarchist essayist and philosopher Gustav Landauer were the most prominent, proclaimed a new Soviet republic only to have an even more radical Bolshevik faction, led by Eugen Levine, proclaim a Communist regime.

Eisner had been murdered in the early turbulences. When the government troops returned in May, Toller, at age twenty-six, became the commander of the Red Army and led the workers' detachments in the brutal street fighting. When the Soviet republic was smashed, Landauer was assassinated and Neurath and Toller were put on trial for treason.

Weber appeared in court for both. He testified to the integrity of Neurath and spoke particularly "in behalf of Toller, of whose idealistic thinking he was certain as he was of his political immaturity." During the court hearing, (as Marianne Weber continues), Max Weber characterized Toller as a *Gesinnungsethiker* [a man guided by an ethic of ultimate ends] who was *weltfremd* [visionary] in the face of political realities and who had appealed, unconsciously, to the hysterical instincts of the masses. "In a fit of anger," Max Weber said, "God made him a politician."

Toller was sentenced to the prison fortress of Niederschönenfeld where, in October 1919, in a feverish period of two and a half days, he wrote his famous expressionist play *Masse-Mensch* (or, as the title is given in the Nonesuch Press edition of 1923, *Masses and Man: A Fragment of the Social Revolution of the Twentieth Century*).

Masse-Mensch is a morality play, as stark and simple as *Jedermann*, but its theme is the dilemma of the use of violence for a just cause. The leader of the revolution is a woman, Sonia, who desires a revolution by the *Masse* but also has reverence for individuality, *Mensch*. The revolution begins in blood and is

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drowned in blood. During the revolution Sonia (the only individualized person) loses control of events to "der Namenlose," the nameless one, the faceless image of mass violence. The revolution fails and Sonia is condemned to death. "Der Namenlose" appears in prison and tells Sonia she can be freed, but only at the expense of the death of a warder. Sonia refuses, and in a dialogue that echoes Weber and adumbrates Brecht (the apology for revolution written ten years later, *Die Massnahme,* a *Lehrstück* whose title echoes Toller's so eerily), Toller writes:

The Nameless: The Masses count, not man.
No, you are not our heroine, our leader!
Each carries the infirmities of origin;
And you birth-marks of your class—
Weakness and self-deception.
The Woman: No, you do not love people!
The Nameless: Our Cause comes first.
I love the people that shall be,
I love the future.
The Woman: People come first.
You sacrifice to dogmas,
The people that are now.
The Nameless: Our Cause demands their sacrifice.
But you betray the Masses, you betray
The Cause.
You must decide to-day.
Who wavers, helps our masters—
The masters who oppress us and starve us—
Who wavers,
Is our foe.
The Woman: If I took but one human life,
I should betray the Masses.
Who acts may only sacrifice himself.
Hear me: no man may kill for a cause.
Unholy every cause that needs to kill.
Whoever calls for blood of men,
Is Moloch.
So God was Moloch,
The State Moloch,
And the Masses—
Moloch.

I met Toller in New York in 1937. I was chairman then of the Student Strike Against War at the downtown branch of the City Col-

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lege of New York. I had read Toller's *Masse-Mensch* and passionately cited its arguments against "the left." I had devoured *The Swallow Book*, the long poem written in prison, and then *Look Through the Bars*, his letters written from prison, including his poems. His autobiography and his plays had framed my consciousness. I shared the romanticism, yet feared, too, the unchained holocaust that the excesses of passion could fire.

I wrote to Toller expressing my admiration, and asked him to join us as he, twenty years before, had asked his elders to join him. He responded with a sad note expressing his dismay at the turn of events in the world, yet consented to appear. It was an April day, a chill was in the air. He came up to our platform, a slim, compact man of swarthy mien, with deep-set eyes ringed in black. I began eagerly, volubly, to tell him how much I loved his writing, but he seemed distraught and ill at ease with this attention. I introduced him to the crowd, most of whom had never heard of him. He spoke slowly, haltingly, in broken English. Most of the students did not listen. After a short while he stopped and then, after a brief nod to the knot of us on the platform, walked away. Two years later, after the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, his nerves broken by the tension of his pacifism and his certainty of a new, brutal war, he committed suicide, acting out his own ethic of ultimate end.

The second young man in the Weber circle with whom the Webers "struck up a close friendship," (as Marianne Weber characterizes it), was Georg von Lukács. Lukács was the son of a Hungarian-Jewish banker, Georg von Lukács, who had been given a patent of nobility for services to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and the son retained the inherited "von" until he joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918.

In the years shortly before World War I, Weber had broken out of his own ascetic puritanism to explore erotic relationships; had met, through Friedrich Gundolf, the famous aesthetic poet Stefan George; and had become the center for a group of young Russian students with whom he held long discussions on Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, particularly on Tolstoy, whose dedication to moral purity and discourses on the Sermon on the Mount attracted Weber profoundly.

In this context, Lukács, with his own burning aesthetic and ethical concerns, found a ready audience. In 1910, at age twenty-five, Lukács had published a collection of diverse essays in Hungarian, *The Soul and the Forms*, which appeared in a somewhat

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expanded form in German one year later. One essay, "The Bourgeois Way of Life and Art for Art's Sake," a meditation on Theodor Storm—a novelist and poet now almost forgotten but who in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was, with Eduard Mörike and Theodor Fontane, one of the most important writers in Germany—poses a paradox in its title and resolves it through a formulation that became a recurrent motif in the cultural pessimism that has persisted to this day. In its rising period, said Lukács, bourgeois life and culture fused in the form of a calling:

> A bourgeois profession as a form of life signifies, in the first place, the primacy of ethics in life: life dominated by something that recurs systematically and regularly, something that happens again and again in obedience to a law. . . . Its most profound consequence, perhaps, is that such dedication can vanquish egotistic solitude.

But in a time of dissolution the community is dissolved, the artist lives at a distance from the everyday world of the bourgeoisie, while the craftsman finds his meaning only in the practice of his calling, of duty, as an end in itself.

In this essay Lukács was giving expression, through aesthetics, to what Weber himself had foreboded in the melancholy last pages of *The Protestant Ethic* one half-dozen years before: the forbidding image of the "mechanized petrifaction" of worldly asceticism, and to what Thomas Mann had depicted in his great novel published after the turn of the century, *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie*, about the four-generation cycle of a bourgeois mercantile family which ends in a disintegration that the effort of the last son, Hanno, a life committed to art, cannot forestall.

This tension between "form" and "life" was the center of Lukács's aesthetics. One could not establish a "form" *in* life, because life, chaotic and alienated, lacked a center; yet form still existed in art, and the question for Lukács was whether artistic form could overcome the alienated life that was dissolving the culture.

The Soul and the Forms, as is true of any passionate writing by a young man, has its autobiographical dimensions, and the real hero of the book, (as Andrew Arato and Paul Breines have noted), is Søren Kierkegaard. Largely neglected after his lifetime, except for a long study by the Danish critic Georg Brandes in 1877, Kierkegaard quickly became known in Germany before World War I because of the translations of his work from 1909 to 1914. Lukács was among the first to explore his thought.

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The essay on Kierkegaard is entitled, significantly, "The Foundering of Form Against Life," and subtitled "Søren Kierkegaard and Regine Olsen." The essay deals less with any of Kierkegaard's theological arguments than with his renunciation of Regine Olsen as a necessary step in becoming the ascetic hero and the quest for the absolute life undertaken absolutely: "The world of human communion, the ethical world whose typical form is marriage, stands between the two worlds of Kierkegaard's soul: the world of pure poetry and the world of pure faith." His gesture of renunciation was "a way towards the great, the only absolute love, the love of God."

Kierkegaard, wrote Lukács, "built his whole life upon a gesture." His "heroism was that he wanted to create forms from life. His honesty was that he saw a crossroads and walked to the end of the road he had chosen. His tragedy was that he wanted to live what cannot be lived."

Written in 1909, these words would become a gesture ten years later and the statement itself could well serve, as we shall see, as an epitaph for Lukács's own life.

From 1912 to 1915, Lukács was a member of the Weber circle, particularly at the regular Sunday afternoon open house, where Weber's presence dominated the scene though, as his wife wrote: "Only a few of the guests like Gundolf or Lukács were able to express their ideas well enough to become independent points of interest." Weber became absorbed in Lukács's work in aesthetics, but he was most taken by a story Lukács wrote in 1912, *"Von der Armut am Geiste"* (Of the Poor in Spirit), about the self-reproach of a young man after the suicide of a girl he had loved—a thinly veiled autobiographical event. The core of the discussion is the idea of "goodness" which, like Weber's idea of charisma, means "being graced with the power to break through the forms."

A Dostoevskian tenor runs through the story. As in *Notes from the Underground*, there is the derision of "goal-oriented," "responsible," or "useful"—in short bourgeois—behavior:

> What does goodness care for consequences. . . . Goodness is without use as it is without reason. . . . Goodness is divine, metapsychological. When goodness appears in us, paradise has become reality and the divinity is awakened in us. . . . Do you recall Sonya, Prince Myschkin, Alexei Karamasoff in Dostoevsky? You have asked me whether there are any good men: here they are.

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The story, more clearly than most of Lukács's writings, reveals the *two* souls in his breast: the one, seeking to be among the select few who can prepare for "goodness"—to free himself from his "psychological determination" (i.e. his own bourgeois past), to achieve the "meta-psychic necessity," the "turn from the empirical state to the authentic life," where the good men are the "gnostics of action"; the other, the formal notion of ethical obligation, the finding of one's *daemon*, accepting the idea of duty, and to be "possessed" by one's work, which is the true virtue.*

As Marianne Weber recalls and sums up those days and moods, writing a decade later, following the death of her husband:

> For Lukács the splendor of inner-worldly culture, particularly its aesthetic side, meant the Antichrist, the "Luciferian" competition against God's effectiveness. But there *was* to be a full development of this realm, for the individual's choice between it and the transcendent must not be facilitated. The final struggle between God and Lucifer is still to come and depends on the decision of mankind. The ultimate goal is salvation *from* the world, not, as for [Stefan] George and his circle, fulfillment in it (emphasis in original).

Lukács had hoped to settle into the quiet academic peace of Heidelberg, but the war, along with the support given to Germany by most of the intelligentsia, including Weber, shattered those intentions. In 1914-15, Lukács wrote *The Theory of the Novel*, which is the most concentrated of his writings on the novel as a form. The analysis is cool throughout, until the last pages, where a burst of cultural pessimism breaks through and Lukács declares that "the novel is the form of the epoch of absolute sinfulness, as Fichte said, and it must remain the dominant form so long as the world is ruled by the same stars." Only in Dostoevsky, he proclaimed, does one see the glimpse of a new world, of a writer perhaps as great as Homer or Dante. "It will be the task of historico-philosophical interpretation to decide whether we are about to leave the age of absolute sinfulness," or

*That the episode and the dilemma possessed Weber as well is evident from the fact that, as Arthur Mitzman reports, "Weber thought so highly of the story that he proposed showing it to the lover of one of Marianne [Weber's] friends, together with *The Brothers Karamazov*, to dissuade him from the idea that moral behavior should be judged by its results, rather than its inherent worth." What is equally clear is that the sexual element, which seems to have lain behind Weber's nervous breakdown and his two crucial extramarital affairs, was involved in Weber's identification with this story.

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whether those hopes will be crushed "by the sterile power of the existent."

In 1915 Lukács returned to Budapest, and a small Sunday afternoon group gathered about him and his friend Béla Bálazs for discussions patterned after the gatherings of the Weber circle. Among the younger members were Karl Mannheim, Arnold Hauser, Frederick Antal, and Michael Polanyi, men who became famous in the Anglo-American world, as well as a group of older and today less well-known Hungarian intellectuals. The subject for discussion was always chosen by Lukács and invariably centered on some ethical issue suggested by the writings of Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard. Politics and social problems, as Arnold Hauser later recalled, were never discussed. In addition the group set up a "Free School" in 1917, and various members gave lectures on their interests. As Mannheim remarked in a programmatic lecture, the cultural tradition with which the faculty wished to be identified included "in *Weltanschauung* and attitude towards life, Dostoevski; in our ethical convictions, Kierkegaard . . . ."

The Hungarian Communist Party was formed on November 24, 1918. Lukács joined the party the next month along with his wife Yelena Grabenko, and Béla Bálazs. The "Sunday afternooners," who remained uncommitted, received the news with stunned belief. As Lee Congdon reports: "They had come to know him well and had heard him speak often of Dostoevski and Kierkegaard and of the great universal moral problems that defined the human condition. But they had never heard him speak of Marx or the necessity of political involvement."

The Communists were even more puzzled. In his autobiography, the proletarian writer Lajos Kassak recalled his surprise at learning that Lukács was writing for Communist magazines:

> . . . he who a few days earlier had published an article in *Szabadgondolat (Free Thought)* in which he wrote with philosophical emphasis that the communist movement had no ethical base and was therefore inadequate for the creation of a new world. The day before yesterday he wrote this, but today he sits at the table of the *Vörös Ujsdag* editorial staff.

In that article, "Bolshevism as a Moral Problem," which was published, ironically, in the month that Lukács joined the Party, he questioned the view that the victory of the proletariat would end op-

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pression. If Marx's claims were admitted, "then it is necessary to accept evil as evil, oppression as oppression, new class rule as class rule." The Bolsheviks in their belief that good (the classless society) could issue from evil (dictatorship and terror) were demonstrating a faith which was an instance of *credo quia absurdum est*; and he was unable to share that faith, since the better part of wisdom was the use only of moral means to achieve moral ends.

Yet a week later, Lukács had experienced a conversion. Like Kierkegaard, Lukács now staked his entire life on "a gesture." In an essay of a decade before, Lukács had been taken with Kierkegaard's "stages on life's way," which Kierkegaard had defined as the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. But these were not worlds of rational ascent, since an "unbridgeable gulf" lay between each. The move from one to the other could only be taken by a "leap"—that existential decision which Lukács saw as "the metamorphosis of the whole of a man's existence." And now Lukács had also taken a "leap"—not from the ethical to the religious but from the ethical to the political—which was in its own way religious. With that leap, Lukács became one of the special breed of *virtuosi* whose lives are caught up in the endless rhythm of sin and atonement and the tragic sense of never knowing whether the outcome is salvation or damnation.

The stumbling block for Lukács had been the problem of terror and the probability that the dictatorship would not liquidate itself. He had meditated profoundly on Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, had discussed the question with his wife, Yelena Grabenko, who had served a term in the tsarist prisons for membership in the terrorist wing of the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party and, unlike most intellectuals who joined the party, he had the courage to gaze squarely at that Medusa's head.

In an essay published in 1919, entitled "Tactics and Ethics," Lukács set forth his *apologia pro vita sua*. In the "age of absolute sinfulness" there is no escape for men who wish to preserve their moral purity. All men are caught in the dilemma of the violence of the revolution and the meaningless violence of the old, corrupt world. Yet the choice was not arbitrary if one understood the idea of "sacrifice," which was the sacrifice of one's own moral self. Lukács underscored this by citing the novels of Boris Savinkov, the Russian Social-Revolutionary terrorist who had been one of the assassins of the Russian minister von Plehve:

> Murder is not permitted; murder is an unconditional and unforgivable sin. Yet it is inescapably necessary: it is not permitted, but it must be

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> done . . . . Savinkov sees not the justification of his act (that is impossible), but its deepest moral root in that he sacrifices not only his life, but also his purity, morality, even his soul for his brothers. In other words, only he who acknowledged unflinchingly and without any reservations that murder is under no circumstances to be sanctioned can commit the murderous deed that is truly—and tragically—moral.

And Lukács concludes:

> To express this sense of the most profound human tragedy in the incomparably beautiful words of Hebbel's Judith: 'Even if God had placed sin between me and the deed enjoined upon me—who am I to be able to escape it?'

When I first read that passage in 1974, I suddenly realized that it was Lukács whom Weber had had in mind in those closing pages of "Politics as a Vocation"; that when he had written, "The proponent of an ethic of absolute ends cannot stand up against the ethical irrationality of the world," it was Lukács's decision that had prompted Weber's anguish.

So many blurred images now came into coherent focus. Long ago I had discussed with my old City College classmate Melvin Lasky the remarkable pages in Franz Borkenau's *World Communism* (1938) in which that knowledgeable ex-Communist (the fallen angel of the Frankfurt School) had cited a little-known article written in 1921 by Ilona Duczynska (the wife of Karl Polanyi and one of the founders of the Hungarian Communist movement), on the occasion of her early break with the Communist movement, referring in a veiled way to Lukács:

> A theoretician and perhaps the only brain behind Hungarian communism once said to me: 'The highest duty for communist ethics is to accept the necessity of acting immorally. This is the greatest sacrifice that the revolution demands of us. The conviction of the true communist is that evil transforms itself into bliss through the dialectics of historical evolution.'

And it was this "dialectical theory of wickedness" which was the heart of the famous portrait of Lukács drawn by Thomas Mann in the character of Naphta, the Jewish-Jesuit dialectician in *The Magic Mountain*.

In my Hobhouse lecture at the London School of Economics in the spring of 1977 titled "The Return of the Sacred?", I wrote a sec-

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tion on Lukács and the gnostic sources of political religions. I thought then of making the connection between Weber and Lukács, but I had no evidence other than speculative allusions and, though fascinating as a moral detective story, the excursus would be a digression in the thread of my argument.

In 1979, I had begun a correspondence with the Hungarian sociologist Agnes Heller, the last pupil of Lukács and his literary executor. Miss Heller, her husband Ferenc Feher, and their colleague András Hegedüs, a former Communist prime minister of Hungary, had some years earlier lost their teaching positions and were persecuted in mendacious ways for publicly raising questions about bureacracy, the right of free opposition, and similar issues, albeit within the framework of socialism. Finally, Miss Heller and her husband were able to leave and take up teaching positions in Australia. In one of my letters, I raised with Miss Heller my belief that one of the hidden threads in Weber's essay, and the person he had in mind in the crucial section I quoted earlier, was Lukács. She replied:

> As to *Politik als Beruf*: the passage *is* interconnected with conversations and debates between Weber and Lukács but not in a direct way . . . there is a [different] direct link: in January 1919 Weber sent a personal warning letter (eine Art von Kassandrabrief) to Lukács, recently having joined communism, whose basic content is: the much too bold Russian experiment will—morally and sociologically —discredit socialism for a hundred years. This was an unexpected turn with Weber: worrying *for* socialism. This basically is the background.
>
> Dostoevsky, you are right, is fundamentally 'imported' into this problem complex by Lukács. (Under separate cover, my husband Ferenc Feher will send you his essay *Am Scheideweg des romantischen Antikapitalismus* which will contain the 'secret' story of a Lukács-Dostoevsky book, Russian revolution, etc.) But quite specifically this is a highly unjust passage* and definitely no answer to Lukács. It is unjust (a) because it

*In the passage on means and ends that Miss Heller refers to, Weber says:

> . . . even during the war the revolutionary socialists (Zimmerwald faction) professed a principle that one might strikingly formulate: 'If we face the choice either of some more years of war and revolution, or peace now and no revolution, we choose—some more years of war!' Upon the further question: 'What can this revolution bring about?' every scientifically trained socialist would have had the answer: One cannot speak of a transition to an economy

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amalgamates Lenin and Rosa [Luxemburg]: Lenin did have the belief that 'noch einege Jahre Krieg und Revolution *anstatt* jetzt Friede und keine Revolution.' Rosa most definitely did not. The reference to Spartakism in this regard and *in this very moment*—the historical moment of her butchery—is not altogether pleasant. (b) Lukács has *never* represented an ethics of love which turned into a simple (Machiavellian) ethics of the 'final' violence. But it is true that Lukács made it understandable for Weber in many ways that the personal ethics of the Grand Inquisitor and the collective ethics of the Russian revolutionary have many important features in common and that in the contrast between the (impotent) love ethics of Jesus of the parable and materialistic Gewaltethik of the Inquisitor the basic moral antinomy of the period is expressed.

So there it was. Weber, in his own anguish at seeing the young men who had stirred his life in his old age turn to revolution, had sought to deter them, or at least to answer them before History. In an immediate sense his effort was futile. But is there some charity in all this? Toller had withdrawn to an absolute pacifism and suicide. Lukács had gone through the vale of tears to the bitter end, a cosmic rationalist driven by a Faustian romanticism to the devil's pact which bound him to the end of his days.**

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that in our sense would be called socialist; a bourgeois economy will reemerge, merely stripped of the feudal elements and the dynastic vestiges. For this very modest result, they are willing to face 'some more years of war.' . . . With Bolshevism and Sparticism, and, in general, with any kind of revolutionary socialism, it is precisely the same thing. It is of course utterly ridiculous if the power politicians of the old regime are morally denounced for their use of the same means, however justified the rejection of their *aims* may be.

**The nadir of this was Lukács's degrading "confession" in Moscow in 1934 to the philosophical section of the Communist Academy, when he repudiated the book which had made his reputation, *History and Class Consciousness*. As he said at that time:

. . . I began as a student of Simmel and Max Weber (I was then under the influence of the German philosophical tendencies, the *Geisteswissenschaften*) and developed, philosophically speaking, from subjective idealism to objectivism, from Kant to Hegel. . . . I entered the Communist Party of Hungary in 1918 with a world outlook that was distinctly syndicalist and idealist. . . . The book I published in 1923 . . . was a philosophical summation of these tendencies.

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As the preacher Koheleth has said: "In my empty existence I have seen it all, from a righteous man perishing in his righteousness to a wicked man growing old in his wickedness. Be not over-righteous and do not be over-wise."

My early sorrows, fortuitous as these were, had come with the awareness of "Kronstadt." That knowledge, combined with my temperament, made me a lifelong Menshevik—the chooser, almost always, of the lesser evil.

Having lived through—as an observer, with God's grace, rather than as a victim—the Nazi frenzies and the Stalinist purges, the Holocaust and the Gulag, the calculated decimation of an educated class in Cambodia and the gleeful butchery of different tribes in Uganda, all of which has made this the most dreadful century in human history, I long ago came to fear the masses in politics and those who would whip up the passions of the mob "in the name of the people," as was once done in the name of God.

I have always thought myself a Socialist in economics, in that I have argued the principle that the resources of the community, as a first lien, need to be used to satisfy the "basic needs" of all (and the concept of "basic needs" is not that ambiguous; it is that which is below the "discretionary income" of the middle-class purse). And because I cherish deeply the cords of continuity that a tradition can provide, as against the syncretism which indiscriminately jumbles all cultures, I am a conservative in culture. And as for politics: if there is any lesson to be learned from this dreadful century, it is that ideological politics, politics *à outrance*—the politics shouted in the name of the people which, as Groucho Marx once observed, seeks power for those who shout "power to the people"—destroys the people and often those who shout as well. The ethic of responsibility, the politics of civility, the fear of the zealot and the fanatic—and of the

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. . . In the intellectual sphere, the front of idealism is the *front of Fascist counter-revolution and its accomplices the Social Fascists*. Every concession to idealism, however insignificant, spells *danger* to the proletarian revolution. . . . With the help of the Comintern, of the All-Union Communist Party and of its leader, Comrade Stalin, the sections of the Comintern will struggle . . . for that iron ideological implacability and refusal to compromise with all deviations from Marxism-Leninism (italics in the original).

(Quoted by Morris Watnick in "Georg Lukács: An Intellectual Biography," *Soviet Survey* (London), April-June 1958.)

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moral man willing to sacrifice his morality in the egoistic delusion of total despair—are the maxims that have ruled my intellectual life.

And yet, as Hegel has said, history teaches nothing to those who think they can change "its" course. ("Examples of virtue elevate the soul, and are applicable to the moral instruction of children.") The corrupt romanticism of "revolution"—the moral equivalent of war!—exerts its constant and renewed fascination. Against the grossness of bourgeois life, as in Germany, or the slough of bureaucratic despond, as in Italy, the new young terrorists, like the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany or the Red Brigades in Italy, resort to bombings and executions to tear down the "repressive State." And undoubtedly, when their letters are published and their diaries are read, we shall also have their anguished reflections about murder and morality. The language is now hollow and stilted, a self-indulgence of the adolescent soul. Seventy years ago, among the young Russian terrorists, each act was undertaken in fear and trembling, for the youthful idealist recognized that he was committing murder and more often than not sacrificed himself suicidally in the act. Today, in the widening gyre of terrorism, the individual sense has become anesthetized, and terror has become a catechism of the Calibans.

I am too weary to listen, too angry to hear. Still in my mind are the injunctions of Max Weber: "He who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics." It was this quotation with which I ended my monograph in 1952 on *Marxian Socialism in the United States*. Since the death of socialism is the most tragic—and unacknowledged—political fact of the twentieth century, it is an injunction to be heeded now more than ever.

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Arthur Cohen

KAFKA'S PRAGUE

Caroline Commanville, Flaubert's niece, records in her memoir the sacrifices which her uncle made for literature—his loneliness, his celibacy, his disdain for the attachments of wife or family, and she concludes that he came ultimately to regret his departure from *"la route commune."* She cites in evidence Flaubert's agitated comment upon their leaving the home of a married friend, who sat in evident content, surrounded by her appealing children. As they returned along the Seine to Flaubert's solitary quarters, Madame Commanville reports, her uncle observed *"ils sont dans le vrai,"* referring by this phrase to the example of domestic felicity which they had just seen. And, as though persuading himself further of what he had already announced, Flaubert repeated again, but this time with increased gravity, *"ils sont dans le vrai."*

Franz Kafka often cited this remark of Flaubert's as a paradigm of his own situation. Kafka felt himself particularly identified with the great Flaubert as well as with Heinrich von Kleist, whose own autobiography resembled in so many ways his own misery of *misalliance* with family, work, friends, and vocation. Both Flaubert and von Kleist suffered in alienation from *"le vrai"*—the common, pedestrian round of days, where routine is ostensibly salvaged from tedium by the affection and intimacy of life *en famille*.

If I construe Kafka's life as arid, I do so with full recognition of the superlative achievement which was recognized least by himself. Kafka also failed to find compensation in his personal life: the number of occasions on which he was able to claim pleasure in his days were a half-dozen—perhaps, the exuberant night in which he finished his story *The Judgment*, the few days of happiness he spent at Marienbad with Felice Bauer, the intermittent moments of contentment at the very end with Dora Dymant. The *Diaries* and the *Letters* confirm persistent psychogenic and physical distress—migraines, shooting pains, insomnia, feelings of paralysis—and in the last years consumptive attacks, internal bleeding, and anxiety of the deepest order. All these alarums of psychic unease and physical illness

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served Kafka with excuses for lateness or cancellation of appointments, and engendered a distinctly queer arrangement of lodgings (maintaining, as he did for many years, one apartment in which he slept, another in which he wrote, and a third—the home of his parents—in which he took his meals and kept score for them while they played cards). In Kafka's view, his despair provoked his body to rebel against the orderly seductions of *"le vrai,"* but in his last years, he was increasingly confirmed in the sadness of his condition and the decisions he had made on behalf of literature to cut himself off from the possibility of ordinary life. Kafka had left nothing to chance. He saw both his disease and his achievement as fatal necessities.

Kafka's relatively brief life was passed within a small area of his native city, bounded by the precincts of the Altstädter Ring, whose principal monuments were the rococo Kinsky Palace, the baroque church of St. Nicholas (in one of whose converted clergy houses Kafka was born in 1883) a short walk from the Judenstadt whose synagogues, small shops, and brothels marked the presence of a poor and *petit-bourgeois* Jewish community. The gothic and baroque quarter of old Prague was a small city within a sprawling nineteenth-century metropolis in which Czechs from the countryside settled by the tens of thousands, to which Germans from the Sudeten came briefly to study, to which Jews began to come after restrictions against their internal migrations within Bohemia-Moravia had been lifted.

During the years of his childhood, Kafka rarely left Prague, and in his maturity his brief trips to Paris, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and the Bohemian countryside were few. Rather it was Prague—the city which had, in his words, "claws" to whom one must surrender or else, as he wrote a friend, "we would have to set it on fire from two sides" (the castle complex of Hradcany and the ancient citadel of Vysehrad)—that was the home of Franz Kafka and his enemy. Yet Kafka was constricted by no single Prague: his prison was everywhere, devised according to his own doctrine of penal constructions and justified punishment.

After years of fantasizing escape and urging others to undertake the surrogacy of flight, Kafka managed to leave Prague for Berlin, also a fantasy city, where he imagined that Jews speaking German could make culture without attracting enmity or notice, where life could be engaged with the greatest intensity and anonymity, where loneliness might be bearable. A secular heaven, Berlin was balanced in Kafka's imagination by the hieratic Palestine. At the very end of his life, the two fantasies came to reality—he studied Hebrew seri-

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ously and considered moving to Palestine to become a carpenter (not very dissimilar in this respect to Walter Benjamin's contemplated emigration to Palestine at Gershom Scholem's insistence). At the same time he dreamt of the Berlin that would distance him from the oppressive weight of Prague, which contained his family and his employment. He even imagined that flight would cure his illness.

On September 24, 1923, only nine months before his death, Kafka arrived in Berlin and shortly thereafter began to live with Dora Dymant, a young woman of orthodox Jewish background, in the suburb of Charlottenburg. The privation of those postwar days broke his health and he returned to Prague in March of 1924, spent his last months at the sanatorium in Kierling near Vienna, and went thence on June 3 to Prague's Strasnice cemetery, marked now by a sign in five languages pointing out the path to the grave where, on June 11, 1924, Franz Kafka was buried alone and then later beside, perhaps even beneath (since he died first), his parents.

In a letter to Max Brod and Felix Weltsch written from Meran on April 10, 1920, the form and substance of Kafka's personal drama of cities is set forth in his description of an evening meal taken at a countryside hotel in Bohemia:

> After the first words it came out that I was from Prague; both of them, the General (who sat opposite me) and the colonel—were acquainted with Prague. Was I Czech? No. So now you explain to those true German military eyes what you really are. Someone else suggested "German-Bohemian," someone else "Kleinseite" (the so-called "Little Quarter" in which the German bourgeoisie were settled in Prague). Then the subject was dropped and people went on eating, but the General, with his sharp ears linguistically trained in the Austrian army, was not satisfied. After we had eaten, he once more began to wonder about the sound of my German, perhaps more bothered by what he saw than by what he heard. At this point I tried to clear up the matter by saying I am a Jew. . . . At the same moment, probably by sheer chance, for all the others could not have heard our conversation, but perhaps there was some connection after all, the whole company rose to leave. . . . The General, too, was very restless, though from politeness he brought our little chat to a sort of end before he hurried out with long strides. That hardly satisfied my human feelings. Why must I be a thorn in their flesh? But otherwise it is a good solution. I shall be alone again without ridiculously sitting off by myself, provided that they don't take any measures. . . .

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This extract might well have been a fictional fragment, one among the many which express Kafka's sense of comic estrangement and alienation for, like those others, it is grounded in a detailed registration of ambiguity. The General was, after all, right in his surmise. Kafka was neither a German-Bohemian nor a Czech, although he spoke Czech extremely well, read its literature, supported its national arts, and wrote it with excellence. Kafka's Prague-German accent bore traces, we are told, of the country German which his father spoke. Linguistically, therefore, as well as culturally, intellectually, and emotionally, Kafka was a mélange; he was above all a Jew of Prague whose language was German, whose earthy affections were Czech, and whose literary language transcended the formalism and stiffness of Prague-German (itself cut off from living German speech).

Is it any wonder then that the General should be curious, the colonel unsettled, the guests unnerved by this thin and severe-looking young man with pale eyes so similar to them in speech and so completely alien? Could it be otherwise? To be a Prague Jew at the beginning of the twentieth century was considerably different and more difficult than being a Jew in virtually any other contemporary city of Western Europe.

Czechoslovakia was part of the Hapsburg Empire until the end of World War I, a vassal nation whose institutions and visible power derived from the splendidly impersonal and correct bureaucracy of Austria. But its peasant class, industrial proletariat, and *petit-bourgeois* were Czech, animated by traditions that opposed the aristocratic Austrian attitudes. It contained also a large German-speaking minority who supplied to the Church, the army, and the civil service their educated managers, loyal to the Emperor of Austria and the cultural dominion of Germany. The Czechs despised the Germans but worked their factories and lands; the Germans loathed the Czechs, regarding their patrimony as rude and uncultivated. The Jews formed one of the oldest enclaves in the nation, having come to the Moldau before the tenth century, settled within medieval Prague and the towns of Moravia and Bohemia. They became small shopkeepers, hawkers, and tinkers who preserved their religion and customs. At the same time curious about their surroundings, the Jews supplied the first grammarian of the Czech language and provided the first topographic description of Czech lands.

The Jews first migrated to Prague over the Alps from the south

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and through the Balkans from the east, a Slavic legacy discernible in Hebrew writings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The second and larger migration of Jews from Bavaria and Franconia (attending the call of the Premyslid dynasty for German colonists) settled into the ghetto of Prague, quickly establishing a lively and enthusiastic connection with Czech language and culture which endured throughout the Middle Ages, as the given names and patronymics of many medieval Jews and the Bohemian folk motifs of synagogue tapestries and Torah vestments demonstrate.

The Czechs were far less inhospitable to the Jews among them than were other sectors of the European dispersion. Jews were infrequently slaughtered (the pogrom of 1389 being a horrendous exception) or expelled from their homes. Although, as elsewhere in Europe, they were considered as an asset of the crown and restricted in their freedom of movement, they were invited by Otakar II to settle within his borders and enjoy economic advantages generally denied them elsewhere. Even if only briefly, the Jews were considered the legal equals of their Czech neighbors, a benefaction recollected in their literature, in their use of the Czech language to annotate their texts and to communicate among each other and with the general populace. Their earliest artifacts date from the sixth century, and they built a synagogue within the city boundaries of Prague to mark the way station of the great caravan routes which Jews traversed between east and west. Upon those earliest foundations, the Jewish community built first the *Alt Synagoge*, presumably destroyed by fire in 1316, and latterly the splendid early Gothic synagogue, known as the *Alt-Neu Synagoge*, completed before 1350 when Jews were prohibited from further synagogue construction and enduring to the present day, a unique example of architectural syncretism, wholly reminiscent of German Gothic and yet condensed and intimate as the Hasidic *klaus* would be.

If the Jews throughout the Middle Ages were the *tertium quid* between German and Czech, subject to the shifting moods of political and economic interest, their situation changed dramatically, but not happily, in the aftermath of their liberation under Maria Theresa and Joseph II of Austria. The Hapsburgs, determined to Germanize their Czech majority by bringing it under the tighter rein of German-speaking administrators, rescinded the restrictions which until then had governed Jewish life, abolishing the ghetto, permitting internal migration, and allowing Jews to establish new families at will. The Austrian constitution which was promulgated after the revolu-

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tion of 1848 concluded a long chapter in the history of official anti-Semitism.

Emperor Joseph II had begun even before 1848. In Johann Bauer's amusing phrase, the Emperor had commenced in 1781 "to solve the Jewish question in the light of rationalist principles." The Josephine reforms no longer obliged Jews to wear the yellow star; Jews were permitted to learn crafts and pursue higher education; to own land and to serve in the Emperor's army. Jews were permitted freedom of religious practice and of migration within the empire. However, since the motive of these reforms was the more efficient and tightfisted control of his realm, the Emperor's reforms were essentially repressive in that they promoted not the flourishing of the Jewish community but its assimilation and ultimate disappearance.

Every Jew was required to adopt a German surname to complement his Hebrew patronymic, and knowledge of the German language became mandatory in order to practice a craft or profession; Jewish businessmen were obliged to keep their account books in German to facilitate regulation and tax inspection; finally a *numerus clausus* was established on the number of Jewish families allowed in the countryside and in Prague, the establishment of new families being restricted to the oldest son, and migration from countryside to city was permitted only when a place fell vacant and property qualifications had been satisfied.

Jewish "emancipation" was completed during the early part of the reign of Franz Joseph. The Prague ghetto was abolished in 1850, being incorporated with the rest of the city under the name of Josefstadt in memory of its liberal benefactor. At that time there were 8,500 Jews in Prague as against a Christian population of 115,000. The Czech majority was linguistically and culturally a persecuted population; the country was being delivered by the Emperor to the Germans. The Jews made an unfortunate, but unavoidable, decision to Germanize, which resulted in the enmity of the Czechs and the contempt of the Germans.

It could not be helped. The joining of the Jew to the elitist German had been encouraged and then decreed, and when the Jews left the ghetto, acquired German language, attended German schools, were required by law to matriculate in the German universities of the Czech lands, it could not have been anticipated that the beleaguered Czechs would be reborn. But the Germanizing policies of Joseph II produced a reaction which led to a renaissance of the Czech national movement. Prague gradually became again a Czech city,

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within which a small minority continued to speak German and rule the institutions of the nation. The Prague German community, cut off by *hauteur* from the German population of the Sudeten and from the Czech majority, continued as a class of rulers by rank and wealth. It became increasingly narrow-minded, denying to itself not only what was Czech but what was cosmopolitan and international within the German realm, rejecting the whole German tradition from Goethe to Thomas Mann. It became in Pavel Eisner's phrase "a Ghetto in matters of language and culture."

Who then was the Prague-Jew, speaking German, educated in German language and culture, distant from the religious institutions that surrounded him with their shards and memories, anxious to join himself to the dominant culture and the ruling elite? The German-Jew in Prague, the Prague-Jew become German, the ancient Jew who had preceded the Czech, become Czech, fallen away from the Czech to become German, was rejected but now was tied inexorably to the German.

The Prague German-speaking Jew was, in the period before World War I, industrialist, bank official, doctor, lawyer, university professor; he was wholesale merchant and import-export trader; he controlled fashion and the dissemination of fabrics and furniture. The Jews of the German ruling class were principals and controllers, but the workers were Czechs, and the real power was in the hands of the German Christians. The Jew raised his children with Czech servants, chauffeurs, cooks, and nurses. The Jew's table was supplied by Czech grocers, provisioners, butchers; his clothes were mended and patched by their labor. All that was menial and indispensable was supplied by the Czechs and from the Czech nurse the child learned the rudiments of his language, speaking it as a foreign tongue, a language suitable for domestics and tradespeople. The young German-Jew was fed by a Czech maid and led to his school by her threatening hand, but he was also seduced by her and later found her charms available for purchase, for she was the streetwalker he followed, and his café haunts always admitted the Czech prostitute as one of its permanent recreations. The universities in the city were rigidly divided between Czech and German, and German-Jews attended the latter, sharing only occasional contact with the facilities of its neighbor. The German-Jew went to the *gymnasium*, read German books, the daily newspapers (predominantly edited, but not owned, by Jews), attended German theaters and art galleries. But the German-Christian enclave—the minority within the minority—

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merely despised the Jews in the familiar terms all European cultures have known. Although, in Kafka's day, eighty-five percent of the German population of Prague was Jewish, they lived as a beleaguered minority, albeit in elitist segregated neighborhoods around the Stadtpark, while the German ruler looked down on their arrival in his schools and university, and held in contempt their passion for his cultivation and ease.

It is no wonder that the family name of Franz Kafka should already contain the ambiguity of his birth. An authentic Czech name, Kafka was acquired in the background of generations when the family lived in Bohemian lands and was presumably on easy terms with its Czech surroundings. When Hermann Kafka rushed from the country village of Osek in southwest Bohemia to Prague, he attached himself to the German minority, acquired German speech and identity, and raised his children within the German community. He settled in the old ghetto, married a woman from the Alstädter Ring into which the ghetto thrust its promontory, and lived in a house at its edge. In this house Franz Kafka was born and briefly lived, and in this miniscule ancient quarter of ancient Prague, the Kafka family had (with the exception of five months) numerous dwelling places for the remainder of their lives.

The ghetto was ordered razed and rebuilt in 1893, and this was carried out, slowly and before Kafka's eyes, between 1897 and 1917. The Fifth District of Prague, known colloquially as *"bei den Juden,"* by Kafka's time, had become a ghost world. But Kafka could speak to his friend Janouch about the incubus of old Prague "still alive in us —the dark corners, the mysterious alleys, the sightless windows, dirty courtyards, noisy pothouses, and secretive inns. We walk about the broad streets of the new town, but our steps and looks are uncertain; we tremble inwardly as we used to do in the old miserable alleyways. Our hearts know nothing yet of any clearance: the unsanitary old ghetto is much more real than our new, hygienic surroundings. We walk about as in a dream, and we ourselves are only a ghost of former times."

The ghost is always within; the reality never catches hold, having no substance beyond the shadows which photographs retain for us, obliging us to consider not only the photograph of Kafka which occupied Walter Benjamin's attention, but the photographs of old Prague by Sudek, Plicka, Pollak, Marco, and Urzidil already snapped by Kafka's eye. Kafka, who fell in love with a woman he hardly knew and to whom he engaged himself twice, demanded of

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her endless photographs, by which we may consider that he charted the obsessive totemization of understanding, for Kafka had told Janouch "that nothing can be so deceiving as a photograph" because truth as an affair of the heart can be secured only through art. The photographs he loved (and his library contained many books of photographs and magazines which specialized in photographic documents) were means of collateralizing dreams and dream language, confirming to him that the reality beyond the old Prague of his dwelling place was as near, as violent, as threatening and decayed as the one at hand. He was a devotee not only of photographs but of film. When told that there was a cinema in a working-class quarter of Prague named Cinema of the Blind (*Bio Slepcu*) he is said by Janouch to have laughed "louder than I ever heard him before or since." "Every cinema should be called that," he said. "Their flickering images blind people to the real."

That the real constituted the true horror—and that to Kafka his own evocation of horror *was* the reality—is illustrated by the question Kafka is said one morning to have asked his neighbor, Karl Thieberger, the father of his friend and Hebrew teacher: "What have you to say about the dreadful things going on in our house?" Kafka was alluding to his story, *The Metamorphosis*, which he had just finished, but his question was not asked, as one of us might ask it, to prompt the pleasure of revealing the existence of a new work, but rather (as all testified to the question and its transmission throughout the small circle of Prague Jewish writers) that Kafka might express his certainty that the events of his tale were true, that no fiction had been invented, but a dream had been transcribed without the intermediation of familiar devices of the sanity of the writer. Indeed the goings-on in the Kafka house were so dreadful—unspeakable—that Kafka begged his publisher to leave the cover drawing an open door into darkness. Kafka thus admitted the doom in his own house, about him in the city (which all his metaphors addressed as a city of the night), and about him in the continent and the world.

The old city was transformed before Kafka's eyes from the decayed remnants of the ancient ghetto to a well-accoutered commercial district where his father established offices in an old palace and where Kafka lived virtually all of his life. Every city story of Kafka's details without names, situates without identification, makes precise without historical verification. The city is conjured as in a dream and with that particularity out of which dream language is formed, conspicuously concrete, but with the absence of documentation that

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only the ferreting of the unconscious allows. It is no wonder that the most precise description of his own Prague is evoked in a *Diary* rendition of a dream situated in a theater where Kafka is both subject and audience:

> In one act the scenery was so enormous that nothing else was visible—neither the stage, nor the darkened auditorium. In fact, the whole audience was itself on the stage, and the scene was that of the Alstädter Ring, probably seen from the corner of Niklasstrasse. In real life this would have meant that one could not see the part of the square in front of the Rathaus clock, or the Kleiner Ring; but in my dream the stage shifted from time to time in such a way that, for instance, one could see the view of the Kleiner Ring from the Kinsky Palace. The only purpose of this was to display the scene as a whole—it was in fact there in all its perfection and it would have been a thousand pities to leave out any of it, since, as I well knew, it is the most beautiful setting that has ever been seen on earth. The sky was overcast with dark, autumnal clouds; an occasional flash of sunlight was reflected from a coloured window-pane in the southeast corner of the square. Everything was life-size and in perfect detail: it was curious to see windows being blown open and shut by the breeze, soundlessly because the houses were so tall. The square sloped away at a sharp angle; the pavement was almost black; the Tyn church was in its proper place, but in front of it stood a little Imperial palace with a courtyard in which all the other monuments of the square were tidily arranged: the pillar of the Rathaus and which I have never seen, the other fountain in front of St. Nicholas's and the wooden fence around the site that is being excavated for the Hus monument.

The dream is more precise than any story, as though the story were already an edited condensation of the dream, one step removed to daylight, to wakefulness, but still charged with the mysterious disjunctions of the dream. It is no longer Prague in which the cathedral scene in *The Trial* occurs (although every Praguer recognizes it to have been St. Vitus's Cathedral) and the bridge over which characters walk is any bridge joining estranged regions of the city (the Praguer knows that it is the Charles Bridge over the Moldau). Prague was sunk into Kafka as he said—its talons deep in his throat. As he wrote to his friend and doctor, Robert Klopstock, "I believe in the power of places or rather in the powerlessness of people." This is to say that everything is fatality, where one is born, to whom one is born, how one is constituted. These are all the fatalities which the individual is powerless to resist. It is not incorrect then to construe the

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decisions of Kafka's life as a relentless struggle to sever his intimate relations with the world while struggling to succumb to it—to sink himself, had he been fully able, in the clay substance of *le vrai*, learning carpentry, horseback riding, swimming, gardening, Hebrew. But all the time, in the very midst of the most decisive attempts to share a portion of the real, he found the project at hand insupportable, ludicrous to boat on the Moldau or swim in Bohemian lakes. He adored his own contrariety, although he wrote scathingly of antitheses. What life presented in all its contradiction was ineluctable but on that account deserved no elevation to principle. Life does what it can; the real has no opinion. Everything is bespoken in another realm and set forth matter-of-factly in ours. The sufferers are those who have been rendered unfit by their origins. Kafka was finally one who elected to transform the injustice of his condition and elaborate it into a just order, obscurely merited.

Prague was, in its finality, a baroque *scenum*, the setting before which the procedures of withdrawal and severance transpired: Kafka was thrust out—recalling the childhood calamity in which his father locked him weeping on the small balcony overlooking the night city. Kafka was set apart, the oldest child (third after two previous sons had died) who tried to cooperate but couldn't, who wanted to be affectionate but could not bear the intimacy and nakedness. Kafka longed to master the culture around him, but he could not make contact with its earthy immediacy: his body, he observed, lying next to theirs at Bohemian summer resorts, seemed like their own until it began to speak and its language made it the enemy. Among Germans he was cut off as Jew, among the Yiddish traveling players of the Cafe Savoy assimilated, and among the healthy sick to death, obliged, as he wrote in 1916, to "struggle even in order to die." In all things Kafka was beyond *le vrai*, much farther from its prospect than Flaubert who at least had suffered the healthy misfortune of venereal disease.

Throughout Kafka's writing, Prague is a deposit of memory, not Proustian as some have suggested, for there is little comfort taken in the remembered, few experiences worked and reworked until they became ribbon and cakes laid out to offer at interior shrines. Rather it is that Prague is made mythic, retraced into a past where, as Kafka remarked, "we Jews are old the moment we come into the world," more familiar with what is long gone than with what is at hand, intimate with stones which have long since been

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removed, ancient buildings and monuments long ago refaced and renovated. There is, however, one monument which Kafka must have passed a thousand times and to which, nowhere in his writings, can I find direct reference. Upon the Charles Bridge, several blocks from the center of his days, "past statues of saints with their faint glimmer of light" stands a crucifix haloed by golden letters in the Hebrew alphabet proclaiming the *kedushah* (Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts). Beneath this strange and mysterious conjunction appears the explanation. In 1609, in penance for the desecration of the crucifix by an accused Jew of Prague, the community of Israel was obliged to erect above the slighted divinity its own prayer of sanctification. The explanation appears to this day in three languages, Latin, German, and Czech. This is the triple throng of Kafka's Prague.

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Norman F. Cantor

ON THE "ROCKEFELLER REPORT"

In 1964, a national Commission on the Humanities, sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies, the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, and the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, published a report calling for the establishment of what became the National Endowment for the Humanities—a report that had important consequences for American culture and education. In 1978, the Rockefeller Foundation sponsored a new Commission on the Humanities chaired by Richard W. Lyman, at that time president of Stanford University and subsequently president of the Rockefeller Foundation. The Commission issued its so-called "Rockefeller Report" in May, 1980, entitled, *The Humanities in American Life.*

The Rockefeller Commission was an extremely distinguished one and included a significant number of the genuine luminaries in higher education, in the foundation world, and in humanistic scholarship. It included not only the then president of Stanford, but the former president of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the presidents of Smith College, Yale University, the University of Chicago, Tulane University (now president of the University of Pennsylvania), the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Harvard, and the director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. It also included such thoughtful and learned scholars and educators as the late Charles Frankel, William Gass, Martin Marty, Charles Muscatine (who was the leader of a very interesting experimental college in Berkeley in the seventies), Walter Ong, and Helen Vendler. The Rockefeller Foundation generously provided for extensive staff support headed by Gaines Post, Jr., a history professor at the University of Texas. One could only expect from such a stellar commission a report that bristled with profound learning, imaginative proposals, and the most thoughtful and searching examination of the nature and condition of the humanities, on the campus, at least, if not in American life in general. These qualities, however, are lacking in this recently published Report.

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It would be unfair to have expected from a commission even of such well-informed people, who concluded their work in the spring of 1980, that they should have had the prescience to have foreseen the federal electoral outcome of November, 1980. The Report's recommendations assume the continuation of the National Endowment for the Humanities not only at the same substantial level of funding it had reached in the last year of the Carter Administration, but at a significant increase. The Commission can scarcely be faulted for not having foreseen then that within less than a year the announced policy of the President of the United States would be to decrease substantially the funding level of NEH, as well as to eliminate the support rendered to the social and behavioral sciences by the National Science Foundation. Thus, the Report, which proposes various additional funding commitments for the National Endowment for the Humanities, particularly in the area of elementary and secondary education, already has about it a sad air of obsolescence. That the Report appears to have been overtaken by political trends, which if they are realized in the image of the Reagan-Stockman policy for NEH would undoubtedly lead the same Commission today to reconsider many of its recommendations, is not, however, the main problem with this report. The problems are far more fundamental.

The Commission's Report is based upon the following basic assumption with respect to the nature of the humanities:

> *The humanities do not impose any single set of normative values,* whether moral, social, or aesthetic; rather, as a record of the ideals that have guided men and women in the past, *they give historical perspective.* Students made sensitive to what it might be like to live in a different time, place or culture can make value choices without automatically assuming that contemporary reality has no precedent, or that quick scientific or humanistic prescriptions can remedy every problem. *The humanities bring to life the ideal of cultural pluralism* by expanding the number of perspectives from which questions of value may be viewed, by enlarging young people's social and historical consciousness, and by activating an imaginative critical spirit. (Emphasis added.)

The Commission has imposed a severe limitation on itself by considering the humanities so extensively within the context of undergraduate education, rather than within the much broader context of the building of distinctive intellectual systems and the possible impact of these systems upon American culture and society. There is, however, a deeper issue.

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Hard as it is for me to conclude that this superbly qualified group of people would view the content of the humanities in an entirely relativistic way and deny to the humanities any particular intellectual commitments or systems of values, this is the astonishing conclusion to which I must come. Here is a report drawn up in 1980 on the humanities in American life that never mentions the dominant and revolutionary trends in the humanistic disciplines in our time. Not only do the names of Marx, Weber, Freud, and Jung remain absent, but one never hears of Braudel, Le Roy Ladurie, Lévi-Strauss, Geertz, Foucault, Wittgenstein, Habermas, Chomsky, Piaget, Barthes, Frye, Bloom, or other seminal thinkers, European or American, whose systems have massively reshaped the humanities disciplines since 1945. The humanities turn out to be marketable commodities for the educational system in which our college supermarkets place a variety of brand names on the shelves and allow the student to choose at will under the guise of "cultural pluralism." This is a falsification of both the educational and intellectual history of the twentieth century.

With respect to education, while the humanities have played a dominant role in the shaping of the college curriculum—as at the University of Chicago in the Hutchins era and beyond, the Contemporary Civilization Program at Columbia from the thirties into the sixties, the Harvard "Red Book" general education program of the fifties, the large variety of curricular experiments on many campuses in the sixties and early seventies—it has always been within the context of a deep commitment to a particular and in some instances rather narrow spectrum of ideas. The Hutchins-Adler great books curriculum at Chicago was inspired by Neo-Thomism; the Harvard general education program by political and intellectual conservatism in the tradition of T.S. Eliot; the Columbia program in its era of vitality in the forties and fifties was infused by a very strong dedication to the value system one can call metropolitan liberalism as exemplified by Trilling and Barzun. The curricular experiments of the sixties and early seventies normally operated within a framework of values associated with the New Left ideology of that era.

In considering the formative period of the American doctoral and research university (1890-1920), a definable amalgam of specific value systems can also be readily seen to have shaped the graduate school curricula—and the character and temperament of the faculty. Around a core of nineteenth-century positivism, there was added a thick stratum of imperialist social Darwinism, occasionally

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interlaced with Dewey's pragmatist instrumentalism and the more liberal social doctrines associated with progressivism. These "normative values," with relatively modest modifiications, still dominate the curricula and ambience of our major graduate schools. No open-ended "cultural pluralism" here. Social Darwinism keeps revivifying itself in slightly modernized forms—the vehement racism and anti-Semitism that flourished in our distinguished universities well into the fiifties; the eager service of natural and social scientists to the Defense Department, the CIA, and other federal agencies that has waxed and waned and waxes now again; the domination in recent years of Friedmanite market theory in economics; sociobiology. Commitment to the positivist dogma that the advancement of learning and theory in a given discipline is linear is still the governing principle of our graduate school curricula, even though much of the critical thought and art of the twentieth century brings the validity of such a linear view into question.

In considering instances of the condition of the humanities beyond the shaping of instructional programs, one always perceives a distinctive intellectual commitment on the part of the faculty and of intellectuals writing from outside the academy. There is always a very strong commitment to a precise set of "normative values," to a particular way of seeing the world, to a special interpretation of human nature and social behavior whenever humanistic disciplines are in a creative and exciting mode. A slovenly cultural pluralism and a vacuous lack of commitment to a particular approach to literature, history, anthropology, philosophy, or whatever is not at all the situation in which the humanities have been meaningful and important to people within or without the university in the Western world. Certainly in the past twenty years (comparably one might argue in the past twenty centuries), Marx and Freud, T.S. Eliot and Trilling, Foucault and Le Roy Ladurie, Rawls and Habermas all mean something very special to learned people—they represent distinctive cultures, definable intellectual systems. These systems condition whole ways of looking upon the world, including American life.

Intellectual systems do not just "give historical perspective." They immediately, right this moment, shape our understanding of ourselves and others. Ultimately they provide an ideological framework which powerfully affects human behavior and social and political action. And this was true as much in past eras as it is today. It made a very big difference whether one was a Platonist or an Aristotelian in the ancient world, whether one was a Thomist or Ockamist

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or Augustinian in the Middle Ages, whether one was a Cartesian or Baconian in the seventeenth century, whether or not one read Rousseau, and how one read him, in the late eighteenth century. These are not merely texts for schoolchildren or postadolescents, examples of "cultural pluralism"; these are value systems or ideologies that are a matter of life and death. Why this illustrious Commission should have ignored this fundamental fact I cannot understand.

The most amazing and troublesome aspect of this report is its absence of intellectuality. I can well understand this from people who are not academics and scholars, who are not well-informed. I have in the past year encountered a significant number of corporate executives who vehemently affirm their devotion to the humanities without knowing *anything* of the intellectual history of the twentieth century. But one would have expected a very different perception from the extremely lettered and experienced members of this Commission. There can be no more dismal testament to the problems of the humanities in American life than the Rockefeller Commission's total failure to discuss the central intellectual issues in the humanities at this time.

In just about every field of thought and endeavor that the humanities embrace, we have in the last fifteen years witnessed the most profound intellectual upheavals, the deepest and most deeply felt conflicts over theory that the Western world has seen since the onslaught of the Enlightenment upon more traditional and hierarchical culture in the eighteenth century. And these conflicts— whose outcome will shape not only formal academic disciplines but our way of understanding literature, history, and philosophy, of understanding ourselves and the world into the next century—whether fought out in Cambridge, Massachusetts or Cambridge, England, in Paris, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Boston, or New York, remain largely unresolved. The importance and far-reaching significance of these intellectual issues cannot be exaggerated. I would have expected this illustrious Commission to address itself to, at least comment upon, this situation. It has absurdly chosen not to do so. It is as if one published a report on the American economy without mentioning the automobile, energy, and telecommunications industries.

If the Commission had chosen not to abdicate intellectuality and learning in favor of supermarket "cultural pluralism," it might have come around to considering one of the most difficult and troubling questions in the last forty years of American intellectual life. Why have innovations, discoveries, and breakthroughs of great sig-

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nificance in the humanities faculties of American universities petered out over time? Why must we Americans have to turn around and, like eighteenth-century colonists waiting at the dock for news from London, import much of the same ideas from Europe several decades later? Why did the revolution in philosophy that Peirce foreshadowed in the late nineteenth century not spread out into a full-scale analytical movement? Instead, we had to turn to Viennese and English sources for the reconstruction of American philosophy in the later fifties and sixties. Why has the social and cultural history of the French Annales school recently inspired such a transformation of American historiography when there is very little in what Febvre, Braudel, and Le Roy Ladurie have to propound programmatically that was not perceived by the New History of James Harvey Robinson, of Charles Beard, and of Carl Becker in the first third of this century? Why have our departments of literature had to learn the primacy and autonomy of the text from the French structuralists when in a somewhat less didactic and more good-tempered way the American New Critics of the thirties were propounding much the same priorities in literary interpretation? Why did it take so long for the cognitive approach to social psychology suggested by G.H. Mead and the applied sociology advocated by Robert Park in the twenties and early thirties to dominate these fields and then only with the help of ideas and examples imported from Europe since 1940? Why did the literary toryism, royalism, or authoritarianism of Yeats, Eliot, and Leavis come to have such a powerful influence in our English departments after World War II while at the same time the social liberalism of Trilling and Mathiessen was not transmuted into a comparably broad and powerful nativist tradition? Why did the ideas of New Left thinkers of the sixties like Marcuse, Gouldner, Laing, and Norman O. Brown have such an ephemeral and superficial impact upon our campuses?

My formulation of these questions is admittedly controversial and in some respects possibly vulnerable, but behind them certainly lie critical issues about the humanities in America that will not go away because they are ignored by establishmentarian commissions.

As is already well-known from press reports, the single interesting recommendation of this Commission was that the National Endowment for the Humanities and other humanistic funding agencies should address themselves to the problems of elementary and secondary education. That the problems are there and that our public school system is in a shambles is obvious, but how the application of

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NEH dollars to the continuing education in the humanities of schoolteachers, advantageous as that might be, will significantly alter or ameliorate the chaos and debacle of our public schools is a mystery to me. The Commission is fond of uttering hortatory bromides such as "state education officials should enlist the best teachers available to help them defend the immeasurable educational value of the questions, methods, and fields of the humanities." Certainly nothing that it proposes could provide the most meager key as to how this wonderful goal could be achieved.

The Commission itself notes that the quality of students in our colleges of education, from which future schoolteachers are drawn, tends to be below the norm of arts and science and business school students. They do not go on to consider the significance of this fact and the lamentable role that our colleges of professional education themselves have played, along with unionization and politicization, in engendering the morass that is now our public school system from one end of the country to the other. How this vast lump is going to be leavened by a handful of even "the best (mediocre) teachers," who have under the auspices of the NEH received some training in "cultural pluralism," remains unexplained.

As a matter of fact, the one feasible, relatively low-cost major change in secondary education that could be effected is not mentioned. In the older snowbelt states like New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Illinois, we have many state colleges which will not be needed in the eighties as the college-age population rapidly declines. State budget officers are now at work retrenching the faculty and staff in these underenrolled colleges. The one hope for American secondary education would be to transform these redundant post-high school colleges into elite magnet residential secondary schools on the curricular models of the French *lycées* and the German *gymnasia*. And the faculties in these redundant state colleges are already in place who could devise and implement a quality high school education that is now provided by only the most expensive private boarding schools in the Northeast.

There are two other issues in the Commission's report that deserve comment. In both issues, the Commission has glimpsed a problem, but has not focused sharply on its full significance. The Commission stresses—and the Reagan-Stockman policy on NEH and the intended elimination of the social science programs of the National Science Foundation make this much more acute—that the humanities in the universities have to turn to the corporate sector for

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much more support. The Commission notes the distressing fact that although corporations are allowed a 5 percent tax rebate on gifts to higher education, they have used only a little more than 1 percent. Among larger corporations the gift figure is even less than 1 percent. But the Commission's hand-wringing and pointing to the exemplary role of a group of corporations in Minneapolis does not go to the center of the problem.

What needs to be said is that we are seeing among corporate executives the impact of the managerial "bottom line" attitude, the short-term profit maximization that our leading business schools have been teaching their graduates for two decades. These MBA graduates not only do not want to share their profits—even at a very small margin—through more giving to universities, but, in order to impress stockholders with respect to their supposed skillful management, they are even reluctant, in a great many corporations, to invest heavily in long-term product research and development. Instead they choose to maximize the short-term profit statements with catastrophic results we can see, for example, in the automobile industry. Thus, universities, and especially humanities departments, suffer from the crude, selfish, go-go philosophy that their own business schools teach their graduates. As long as the professional schools of law, medicine, and business inculcate in their graduates a dominant attitude of privatism and selfishness, the occasional course in ethics that it is now fashionable to provide for professional school students will have modest results.

This lack of support from the corporate sector is also the consequence of the widespread failure of schools of arts and science to impress upon the corporate world the critical long-term impact of the theories and information that humanities departments engender as the context in which the business decisions of the future will be set. But it is hard to do this when the humanities are seen primarily as vehicles of "cultural pluralism" for undergraduates rather than as formidable shapers over time of specific behavioral and social assumptions within which American corporations will have to function.

The Commission is conscious of another issue. It notes the massive unemployment of Ph.D.s but, again, aside from expressions of distress and a too tepid praise of the Mellon Foundation—whose postdoctoral funding grants to many universities for younger humanists have been the only constructive response of any funding agency to the bad job situation—and the now-conventional urging

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that humanists be prepared somehow for nonacademic jobs, the Commission has nothing to say.

What needs to be stressed as a very critical situation is not only that current Ph.D.s in the humanities are extensively unemployed or miserably underemployed, but also that this adverse labor market is powerfully discouraging the superior minds of the current college-age population from pursuing doctorates and possible careers as academic humanists. So when in the nineties the labor market for Ph.D.s is expected to improve because of a national wave of retirements, there will be very few first-rate trained humanist minds ready to take the academic jobs that will be available. We are in the course of repeating the dysfunctional educational manpower history of the fifties and sixties. The depressed labor market for Ph.D.s in the fifties impeded superior students from entering graduate school in the humanities. When the jobs were available in the sixties, humanities departments often had to settle for mediocre personnel who still dominate many of our faculties, particularly in the new or expanded state universities.

There are two things that need to be done: NEH (assuming its survival in the neo-Neanderthal age) should give priority to alleviating the unemployment situation through extended postdoctoral fellowships: this will be far more beneficial than for NEH to put its limited resources (limited even before the Reagan cutbacks) into elementary and secondary education, where the same dollars that could be spent on postdoctoral positions will have very little positive impact. Secondly, given that so many of our best young minds are now headed from college to law, medical, and business schools, special situations and strategies should be established to allow these superior people, once they are relatively secure in their jobs, to pursue doctoral work in the humanities over extended periods of study, and then to teach part-time. If this is done and should the academic humanities job situation improve, there will be a cadre of first-rate minds that can possibly be recruited in the nineties from the law, medicine, and business professions back into university faculties.

To achieve this alternative, our humanities faculties will have to become much more receptive and hospitable to the part-time graduate student than they are at present. When the big academic depression hit in the mid-seventies, it was not enough for our major graduate schools to have restricted access by postadolescents coming out of colleges, as many institutions did, especially in the Ivy League. This should have been accompanied by development of

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opportunities for mature adults holding secure nonacademic jobs to pursue part-time doctoral studies in the humanities.

There is a possible gain from the discouraging academic job market for Ph.D.s in the humanities that is not mentioned in the report. I have the impression that the proportion of women in doctoral programs in the humanities is steadily increasing, and if this is the case, women scholars will be assuming leadership roles in many disciplines by the end of the century to a much greater degree than ever before. Thus the labor market will achieve to an important degree what affirmative action programs in the seventies were able to achieve only marginally. This raises an important question. If the humanities profession by the end of the century is populated with a large and perhaps majority group of women, does this development have any particular intellectual significance; will it condition the content of humanistic disciplines? I would be both a very wise and brave man were I to answer this question. I doubt that we have sufficient data to give a persuasive answer at this time.

The Commission made some thirty-one recommendations, none beyond the range of good intentions and fond hopes. It should have made a thirty-second recommendation: let our major foundations not waste money on such efforts in the future, but rather use their resources for direct support of high quality research and training.

Although the president of the Mellon Foundation was a member of the Commission, the long-term value of this foundation's funding of postdoctoral fellowships is not sufficiently stressed in the report. If the Rockefeller Foundation would have applied the funds expended in the futile enterprise this report represents toward funding only a handful of three-year postdoctoral fellowships in the humanities for unemployed Ph.D.s, it would have made a much more significant contribution both to the happiness of excellent young scholars and thinkers and to the perpetuation and intensification of the intellectual revolution in a wide array of humanistic disciplines that is now taking place despite adverse political and economic conditions.

But then there may be a long-term benefit in the development of this intellectual revolution within the humanities against unfavorable political and economic forces: a political radicalization of humanists parallel to that which occurred in the later eighteenth century, when both the then decaying universities and the stultified bureaucracies of the *ancien régime* failed to accommodate the most creative minds of that society.

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Carlos Ripoll

THE CUBAN SCENE: CENSORS AND DISSENTERS

There are two categories of writers in Cuba today: those who police their own work and that of their colleagues, and those who are silenced, jailed, and unable to participate in Cuba's cultural life. The existence of these two categories, indeed the entire course of Cuban letters since the revolution, can only be understood in the light of the political events that have occurred since 1959.

The overthrow of Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship in 1959 brought new works and vigor to Cuban letters as young writers incorporated themselves into artistic life and those living in exile abroad returned. Very soon, however, a struggle began between two forces that held opposing views about the function of literature: Fidel Castro's former associates, who advanced ideals of liberty and democratic pluralism and were eager to open Cuban culture to all contemporary trends, and the Communists, who sought to bring every aspect of society under strict control and to press literature into the service of society. The second group was small in number, but not in aspirations. The liberal reformers, deceived by their own false hopes, fell short in the defense of their principles.

The first victories of the Communist ideologues came in the wake of the severing of diplomatic ties between the United States and Cuba. The break occurred in 1961 and was accompanied by Castro's declaration that the Cuban revolution was socialist. It was at this time that the Marxists decided to make a strategic show of strength by launching an attack on the newspaper *Revolución*, the official organ of the government, which antagonized Marxist orthodoxy by putting out a literary supplement that published texts of Pasternak, Joyce, Camus, Mao, Lenin, and Trotsky together with speeches by Castro and Che Guevara. The opportunity for attack came when the government convened the so-called "conversations with the intellectuals" to define the role of culture within the new society. Old quarrels were renewed at these discussions and ultimately the reformist cause and the humanistic spirit that had flourished briefly were dealt a crushing blow: the literary supplement was ter-

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minated, and Castro, notwithstanding his defense of artistic freedom during the discussions, summed up his ideas about the rights of artists in the ambiguous phrase, "Within the revolution, everything; against the revolution, no rights at all."

Subsequent events confirmed that the Marxist view had triumphed. Its influence in cultural matters was immediately demonstrated at the First National Congress of Writers. In the Final Declaration issued by the Congress, writers were told that they must participate "in the great common task of enriching and defending the revolution," and they were warned that literature would have to be purified through "the most rigorous criticism." This was a Caribbean echo of the criteria established at the Congress of [Soviet] Writers in 1934 by Andrey Zhadanov, Stalin's commissar of cultural affairs.

Shortly after the foreboding pronouncements of the writers' congress in Havana, the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) was founded in imitation of the Union of Soviet Writers. UNEAC's role was not, as some had hoped, to protect the interests of artists but rather to protect those of the state in its bid to control the arts. The means of control were put in place with the nationalization of publishing houses and the institution of government monopoly over the press and electronic media.

March 1962 found the liberal reformers and the Marxists debating over solutions to the administrative problems that had come to plague the country, and a few months later the rift between the factions widened as a result of the announcement of Khruschev's decision to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba. Humiliated by the pull out, Fidel Castro reacted by adopting policies and views that came to be known as the Castroite heresy.

In the next five years both factions, liberals and Marxists, scored victories in the realm of the arts, but neither could claim to have prevailed. For example, Che Guevara eschewed socialist realism, but at the same time the only remaining group of writers who had openly repudiated committed literature, the circle known as "El Puente," was disbanded because the government found its members to be "dissolute and negative." A short while later, the UNEAC hierarchy decided that Pablo Neruda should be condemned for having visited the United States, and Cuban writers were obliged to chime in, but contrary to the wishes of the Communists, Castro authorized publication, albeit in a limited edition, of the novel *Paradiso*, by José Lezama Lima, notwithstanding its depiction of acts of sodomy

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among some of the homosexual characters. And so ground was gained and lost by both sides.

Then in 1967 political events seemed to give the liberals the upper hand. In that year Castro publicly berated the Kremlin for its foreign policy, its failure to support the Guevara expedition to Bolivia, and its interpretation of the doctrines of Marx and Lenin in general. At the time, the Cuban President, Osvaldo Dorticós, said with more than a hint of pride, "We have our little heresy." This political challenge was carried over into the cultural arena and culminated in two important events. First, in late 1967 the *Salon de Mai* of Paris was invited to Havana to display the ultra-*avant-garde* of Western European art. Castro was making an obvious show of independence and a play for leadership in cultural affairs by being host to a collection of works that could be considered far more "decadent" and "bourgeois" than those included in the "modernist" exhibit of paintings held six years earlier in Moscow to Khruschev's great displeasure. Second, foreign writers and artists were invited to participate in a highly-publicized Cultural Congress in Havana at the beginning of 1968, and Castro seized the opportunity to taunt Moscow again. To the resounding applause of his international audience, he repeated his criticisms of Soviet foreign policy and contrasted the solidarity shown by intellectuals from all over the world with Guevara's adventure to the indifference and hostility to it shown by the Soviet Union.

In literature the period of the heresy was very productive. It seemed as if Stalin had just died in Havana; 1967 was reminiscent of the "Year of Protest" (1956) in the Soviet Union, when Vladimir Dudintsev succeeded in publishing *Not From Bread Alone* and Pasternak presented his manuscript of *Dr. Zhivago* without being punished. In Cuba, as a consequence of a similar relaxation of censorship, awards were given in 1968 to three works that would soon after be criticized for their "ideological elements frankly opposed to revolutionary thought": *Fuera del juego*, by the poet Heberto Padilla; *Siete contra Tebas*, by the dramatist Antón Arrufat; and the short story collection *Condenados de Condado*, by Norberto Fuentes. From 1966 to 1968, the peak of the "little heresy," Cuban writers were able to experiment with language and narrative structure untrammeled by the constraints of socialist realism. Their imaginative achievements in prose fiction were such that, between the publication of *Paradiso* (1966) and that of *El mundo alucinante* (1969), by Reinaldo Arenas, the Cuban novel seemed to be in the vanguard of the experimental "boom" that was going on in Latin America.

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However, while the intelligentsia celebrated the Cuban challenge to Soviet dominance and the creative freedom that it had fostered, behind the scenes Moscow's reaction was sanguine, for Soviet control over the Cuban economy was such that it could be used to bring Castro to his knees at any moment. As was learned later, a high-level official of the Soviet embassy in Havana had said as much shortly before the Cultural Congress of 1968, boasting, "All we have to do is say that repairs are being stalled at Baku for three weeks and that's that." Indeed, all that was necessary to bring Castro's heresy to a halt was a lowering in the quota of oil shipped to Cuba; months later, when tanks were necessary to eliminate the heresy in Czechoslovakia, Castro defended the invasion. In the cultural arena the end to the Cuban heresy brought a swift and sweeping wave of repression the effects of which are still being felt.

The rebellions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia had begun with restive, dissatisfied intellectuals. The experience the Kremlin had had in these situations dictated stricter vigilance of artists in Cuba. In reality Castro himself had been the heretic; others, nevertheless, would have to go to the pyre.

In 1968 Cuba's Stalinists loudly denounced the awarding of national literary prizes to Padilla and Arrufat and condemned the publication of unorthodox works by others. Their views were again expressed at the Congress of Writers and Artists held in October of the same year, when writers were reminded of their duty "to contribute to the revolution through their works." Dissidents abroad and on the island were attacked in *Verde Olivo,* the magazine of the armed forces, in a series of five articles deploring "the low political level in art and criticism." It advocated "cleansing" Cuban culture of "counterrevolutionaries, the extravagant, and the soft" by means of "politically alert criticism" and concluded that the enemies of the Cuban revolution were the "false apostles who decided to leave the country" as soon as they were confronted with their "dishonest counterrevolutionary games." Many writers had already left: among the older ones, Jorge Mañach, Gastón Baquero and Lino Novás Calvo; among the younger ones, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Severa Sarduy and Carlos Franqui. After the charges in *Verde Olivo,* the doors of emigration were shut tight.

To demonstrate what was expected of cultural institutions, the political leadership of the armed forces organized a literary contest in which works were judged on the basis of political merit, not artis-

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tic value. The first awards, in 1969 and 1970, went to *Tiempo de cambio*, by Manuel Cofiño López, and *Relatos de Pueblo Viejo*, by Juan Angel Cardi, both collections of short stories that simplistically contrast Cuba's corrupt past with its presumably heroic and exemplary present.

The Union of Writers followed suit, conferring its 1969 award on a novel by Alcides Iznaga, *Las cercas caminaban*, an unimaginative critique of capitalist society combined with the obligatory heroic portrait of the Cuban guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra. At the awards ceremony the president of UNEAC, Nicolás Guillén, warned that any writer who failed to fulfill his political duty "would receive the most severe revolutionary punishment." At that session (during which the executive committee expelled José Lorenzo Fuentes, winner of honorable mention in a contest the previous year, as a "traitor to the country"), the members of the Union were exhorted to "redouble their revolutionary vigilance, to avoid all forms of weakness and liberalism, and to denounce any attempt at ideological penetration." In 1971 the *Casa de las Americas* prize went to *La última mujer y el próximo combate,* a novel by Manuel Cofiño López, praised as "revolutionary" for its "clear political objective" in presenting the development of a "socialist conscience."

The First Congress on Education and Culture, in April of 1971, officially ushered in the Stalinization of art which has prevailed in Cuba ever since. In preparation, a campaign was waged to terrorize the intellectual community. It culminated with the arrest of Heberto Padilla, who was made to denounce his friends and colleagues. He had failed to follow the basic guidelines recommended by Soviet writers in Stalin's time: "Don't think. If you think, don't speak. If you speak, don't write. If you write, don't publish. If you publish, don't sign." As a result, he had to obey the last of those rules: "If you sign, recant." Against the backdrop of Padilla's public embarrassment and forced confession, the Congress proclaimed that culture, like education, was not and could not be "either apolitical or impartial," and in a speech delivered at the close of the proceedings, Fidel Castro stated: "We, a revolutionary people in a revolutionary process, value cultural and literary creations with only one criterion: their utility to the people. Our valuation is a political evaluation." That was to be the governing precept for Cuban art thereafter, and because the Communist party of Cuba has always considered itself the embodiment of the will of the masses ("the highest leading force of society," as the Constitution says), in the final analysis Castro's remarks

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meant that the government would judge cultural activity and literary creation on the basis of usefulness to the party.

The purges of intellectuals intensified immediately after the disastrous 1970 sugar cane harvest and continued in succeeding years. All those who did not conform to "parameters" established by the Department of Culture as standards of conduct, morality, thought, and preferences were to be excluded from a variety of occupations and professions. Numerous members of the faculty at the University of Havana were dismissed in the early 1970s for failure to fit the prescribed mold. Several of those singled out were professors of philosophy who were also editors of *Pensamiento Crítico,* the only remaining journal permitted to print interpretations of Marxist-Leninist doctrine that deviated from the official line. With the purge of its editors, *Pensamiento Crítico* ceased to exist. Similar purges were carried out at cultural institutions and government offices, in theatre and dance companies, and in the student body at the University of Oriente. At the same time, the persecution of writers continued. Once labelled "parametrados" (misfits), some were expelled from cultural organizations and dismissed from their jobs. Others were denied permission to publish their works and shunted into obscurity. Still others landed in jail.

In this atmosphere, those who wished to continue writing professionally had to submit to official directives. As editors and judges in literary contests, they could not express their reservations about the quality of the works presented as long as those works satisfied requirements of subject and taste. To secure their professional survival, many felt obliged to keep watch over and inform on their colleagues, since such behavior was considered the best proof of revolutionary conscience.

Those who chose not to submit or whose past did not clearly bespeak loyalty to the government were excluded from cultural life. The number of writers who were restricted in varying degrees or silenced altogether is easily gleaned from a review of Cuban bibliographies from the 1960s on.

In Communist countries writers generally have three ways of making their works known: "state publishing," "self-publishing," and "publishing abroad"—*gosizdat, samizdat*, and *tamizdat*—as they are called in the Soviet Union.

In Cuba writers are prepared for state publishing in *talleres literarios*, literary workshops scattered throughout the island and patterned after the literary studios promoted by Lunacharsky after the

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Bolshevik victory. There, works are read and discussed in the presence of watchdogs from the State Security police. If an author decides to enter his manuscript in a literary competition or submit it for publication in one of the literary periodicals or by a state publishing house, he must present it with a detailed description of his background—identifying his immediate family, his political activities, community service, participation in voluntary work projects, etc.—and a recommendation from his place of employment, which must refer to his political attitude, his revolutionary conduct, and his performance as a worker.

The juries and editorial committees consist of party members and yes-men whose loyalty to the government has been clearly demonstrated. They judge works according to established criteria and the political background of the author. Those are the appropriate standards according to an official statement handed down by the Second UNEAC Congress, which was held in 1977. At the Congress, Cuban writers were told that the Union would only promote "the creation and dissemination of literature that serves to mold the thinking of the general public through its ideological content and aesthetic quality." Members of UNEAC, they were told at that time, are expected to continue their studies of Marxist-Leninist doctrine "so that their works may reflect the essence of social phenomena with the greatest possible depth."

Given these standards and strictures, the works accepted by the state publishing houses have much in common. To please the authorities, they strip reality of its gray areas for the sake of clear, easily digestible contrasts, or they dress official slogans and catchwords in thin fictional disguise to serve an overriding didactic aim. They bear out the fears for literary creativity expressed by Che Guevara in his criticism of "the rigid forms of socialist realism," which he described as a kind of "straight-jacket on artistic expression" with which one can give only "a mechanical representation of a social reality that one would like to see, the ideal society nearly devoid of contradictions or conflicts." To achieve this vision, Guevara added, "one looks for simplifications, what everyone can understand, which is what the bureaucrats comprehend. This approach nullifies authentic artistic exploration and reduces culture to a mere representation of the socialist present and of the past which is dead and therefore safe." Whether or not the literary standard imposed on Cuban writers for the past ten years is referred to as "socialist realism" the stultifying interpretation of culture and the results are the same.

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Token exceptions are occasionally permitted to appear in print, but on the whole, Cuban literature has been forced into this mold. Novels, plays, and poetry alike praise the builders of socialism and describe the process of overcoming bourgeois prejudices. Or they satirize the *mogollón*, the antisocial character who is uninspired by revolutionary shibboleths, complains of shortages and sacrifice, misses work, and fails to meet his goals. In sharp contrast with these wooden figures are the familiar and equally flat *personajes positivos* (positive heroes), whose attitudes and deeds the reader is encouraged to emulate. The language is always simple and straightforward, preferably colloquial, even in verse, so that the masses can easily assimilate the message and better identify with the characters.

This is particularly so in writing intended to popularize and draw support for the latest government program. During the campaign to eradicate illiteracy, UNEAC gave one of its 1962 awards to such a novel: *Maestra voluntaria*, by Daura Olema García. Since then similar tendentious works have often been favored in literary contests and by the editorial committees of the state publishing houses. At the time of the drive to produce a ten-million-ton sugar cane harvest, *Casa de las Américas* honored Miguel Cossío Woodward for *Sacchario*, the story of a heroic, Stakhanovite cane cutter who renounced everything, even his wife, in order to carry out his work. More recently, when the government sought a *rapprochement* with the exile community, prizes went to *Contra viento y marea*, by Grupo Areíto, and *De la patria y el exilio*, by Jesús Díaz, books which praised Cubans in exile who support the Castro regime. *Etiopía: la revolución desconocida,* a volume of essays by Raúl Valdés Vivó, and the short story collection *La sangre regresada*, by Arnaldo Tauler, about the campaign in Angola, were among the works accorded special commendation when the government was seeking mass support for intervention in Africa.

With the publication of *Enigma para un domingo*, by Ignacio Cárdenas Acuña, in 1971, a new kind of detective novel became very fashionable in Cuba. The critics have classified it as "socialist and revolutionary" and are intent on pointing out that it is devoid of "the sickly sensationalism and the cult of violence, sex, and individualism" that characterize the genre in capitalist cultures. This socialist version of the mystery emphasizes the efficiency and honesty of the State Security police and related agencies and the cooperation given them by the people. The plot typically revolves around struggles against spies and infiltrators from the CIA, counterrevolutionary elements abroad, and delinquents on the island.

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The Ministry of the Interior has been promoting these socialist thrillers through a competition for the best such story of the year. According to the official guidelines, the winning entry must "have a didactic character and be a stimulus for prevention of and vigilance against all acts that are antisocial or against the people's power." In 1979 the award went to the novel *Aquí las arenas son más limpias*, by Luis A. Betancourt. As ludicrously described on the book jacket, it is

> a story about a Cuban State Security agent's infiltration of the counter-revolutionary organization Alpha 66, which conducts acts of aggression against Cuba from Miami, in strict collaboration with the CIA. The author enters into the complex microcosm of anti-Cuban terrorism to reveal the titanic work of this agent—work that can only be successful when a just ideology rules the conscience of man—and to reiterate the tireless efforts of the U.S. secret service agencies against our country. The pages of this book are a true testimony of the work that is accomplished day after day by the men of our security forces in their open struggle against the imperialist enemy.

The genre has become so popular among the censors and contest judges that it has recently been introduced to the theatre.

While these forms have developed in response to the party line on the function of literature, others have become popular as safe harbors for those who wish to avoid conflict with the censors. Anthologies of Cuban classics and biographies, for example, as well as collections of documents and historical essays have for this reason attracted some writers.

However, literary criticism has since 1970 been the handmaiden of official policy on culture. The function of criticism has been reduced to spotting books that will serve as tools for mass-indoctrination and to presenting them in a favorable light with the appropriate sprinkling of remarks on style or aesthetic achievement, real or imagined, even though such considerations are lip service to values that no longer really matter in Cuban literature. Thus, prefaces and reviews are little more than a series of clichés adapted to suit the genre and work in question. If it is prose fiction, the critic may stress the author's "socialist, scientific and revolutionary consciousness" and his "devotion to the people" in presenting an "epic of the vanguard's revolutionary zeal in the face of the new socialist duties and objectives." In discussing poetry, drama, and essays, the critics

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tend to dwell on the presence of "revolutionary signs," the writer's "testimony of personal and emotional involvement in the struggle," "the simplicity and directness of the language" with which the work succeeds in moving readers and spectators.

Another now-customary approach is to compare Cuban writing with the "reactionary nature" of works by "commercial artists" in capitalist countries. Without mentioning names, the critics take "bourgeois writers" to task for their immorality, escapism, irrationality, formalism, lack of social conscience, etc. When foreign works are analyzed, they are generally far removed from any controversial subject or written by authors sympathetic to the Castro regime. Others are excluded from the critics' view, just as they are from stores and libraries on the island.

Cuba has no *samizdat*. Because the punishment for unauthorized publication and even possession of unauthorized literature is severe, works not published by the state are not reproduced and circulated clandestinely except in the most intimate circles of friends. As a result, there are many young writers who have never seen their works in print and others whose writing was published during the early years of the revolution but who have effectively been silenced since.

Some find themselves cut off after an encounter with the censors. Among the more pitiful cases was that of Virgilio Piñera, the most highly acclaimed Cuban playwright of this century, who died in 1979. Piñera's misfortunes began with his dismissal from his post for failure to conform to the "parameters" for political culture established in 1971. Thereafter Piñera was prevented from accepting invitations to speak abroad, reduced to living in miserable conditions, and kept under surveillance for the rest of his days. Although unable to publish his works, he nevertheless continued to write and, judging from his letters to friends abroad seems to have left a substantial number of plays and poems. Unfortunately, all of the manuscripts were confiscated upon Piñera's death, which itself was apparently seen as a potentially subversive act, for the State Security police sequestered his body until the moment of his perfunctory funeral.

Another case that illustrates the measures taken to prevent the development of *samizdat* in Cuba is that of Amaro Gómez Boix, a journalist for the Cuban Broadcasting Institute in Havana who was dismissed several years ago for disaffection with the regime. In leisure moments at home he wrote works criticizing the Communist system without, of course, thinking of publishing or circulating them

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or sending them abroad. But in Cuba neighbors are obliged to spy on each other and denounce any abnormal activity they observe. Fulfillment of this revolutionary obligation earns one merit points from the authorities. Thus someone may have reported frequent typing or a light burning late at night in Gómez Boix's home. In any event, for some undetermined reason the Department of State Security became suspicious of Gómez Boix and searched his home in late July 1978. Having found manuscripts of his poems and a novel, they kept him incommunicado at State Security headquarters for forty-five days. Thereafter Gómez Boix was sentenced to eight years in prison, the maximum penalty under the Cuban penal code for "possessing propaganda against the socialist order."

As a result of such repression, there is no real *samizdat* in Cuba. Those who have tried self-publishing have ended up in jail, where literature is clandestinely circulated among the prisoners because they feel there is little more they can lose. With the forms of dissidence common in other totalitarian states today foreclosed to Cuban writers, dissenters in Cuba find themselves in a situation reminiscent of that of writers in Stalinist Russia. Like them, Cuban dissidents have received little attention from the free world, which now serves as the protector of Soviet dissidents. Once Stalinism took definite hold on the island early in the seventies, impartial intellectuals and journalists were kept away. Those who have been in a position to denounce the plight of Cuban dissidents have generally shown indifference if not complicity with the Castro regime. Thus the Cuban dissenter has felt forgotten and isolated and has been easy prey for government persecution and abuse.

Watched over, threatened, forbidden to write, many authors have left the country in the past year. Some have sought asylum. Others have simply escaped. Among them are Heberto Padilla (winner of the UNEAC prize for poetry in 1968); Reinaldo Arenas, author of the novel *Hallucinations* (1969), which was a best seller in Europe; Rogelio Llopis, whose short stories in *La guerra y los basiliscos* (1962) have been translated into English, German, Polish, and Hungarian and have been published in various anthologies; Edmundo Desnoes, author of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968), which was made into one of the best Cuban films produced since the revolution; Antonio Benítez Rojo, whose stories won a 1967 *Casa de las Américas* prize and a 1968 UNEAC prize and who, until he sought asylum in Paris in mid-1980, was the director of publications for *Casa de las Américas*; José Triana, recipient of a *Casa* award for his play

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La noche de los asesinos (1965), which has been highly acclaimed abroad. Other unknown young writers who have refused to compromise their art chose to escape during the mass exodus in 1980.

The only theoretical option for those who cannot escape is *tamizdat*, or publishing abroad. But because nothing alarms the Cuban authorities more, the measures taken to prevent it have been extreme and, as a result, largely successful. Few works by dissident Cuban writers have been printed abroad.

The poet Ernesto Díaz Rodríguez succeeded in sending the manuscript of his book *Un testimonio urgente* to the United States. When it appeared the police took him out of prison, where he was serving a sixty-year term, to interrogate him. In a letter sent through the underground he recounts the experience: "At midnight last April 4 [1978], I was unexpectedly removed from my cell and taken to the Department of State Security, where I was confined to the torture chambers for thirty days. During that period I was forced to present myself for numerous interrogations, all related to my literary work. Once again I have been threatened. 'Your continuing to develop a dissident cultural movement, especially abroad is intolerable, and we will try to prevent it by all the means at our disposal,' they assured me. For my part, I am not prepared to give in, and yes, to pay whatever price may be necessary. To confine a man, to mistreat him, destroy him for printing poems, is like destroying a gardener for the 'horrendous crime' of growing roses . . ."

Angel Cuadra is an internationally celebrated poet whose works have been translated into English, German, and Russian. He was arrested and charged with conduct "against the security of the State" after unsuccessfully seeking permission to emigrate from Cuba in 1967. Having served two-thirds of a fifteen-year sentence, he was paroled in 1976, but then an anthology of his elegiac, apolitical poetry entitled *Impromptus* was published in the United States and, as a result, his parole was revoked. From prison he wrote to the exiled poet Juana Rosa Pita in May 1979, "there was no legal basis for this new reprisal against me. Only that I am a poet; that the world speaks my name; that I do not renounce my song. I do not put it on bended knees, nor do I use it for other, political or partisan ends, but only literary, universal, timeless ones." After participating in prison "rehabilitation programs," Cuadra was to be released again in July 1979. However, when the authorities learned that he had managed to smuggle out the manuscript of a new collection of his poetry which appeared in English translation under the title *A Correspondence of*

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Poems, they transferred him to Boniato prison instead of releasing him. In a letter dated Boniato, September 1979, he wrote to Mrs. Pita: "If the chances of seeing you soon are becoming increasingly more distant, it is because they are taking revenge, venting their anger and injustice against me under false pretenses." Under a constitutional provision giving retroactive effect to penal laws favoring prisoners, Cuadra is entitled to be set free; according to that constitutional norm, he has served his sentence. His attempts to secure a court order for his release have, however, failed.

One of the most pathetic cases of poets in prison in Cuba is that of Armando Valladares. A victim of polyneuritis, he has been confined to a wheelchair since 1974. The onset of his illness was produced by fifty days of deficient diet imposed on him as punishment. In 1979 a book of Valladares's poems entitled *Desde mi silla de ruedas* (From My Wheelchair) was translated into French (it was originally published in 1976 in the United States by his wife, Marta). Mistreatment of Valladares by the Castro regime has increased with recognition of his poetry abroad. Incapable of silencing him, Cuban authorities have resorted to intimidating his family by blocking their departure from the country. A letter sent by Valladares to the PEN American Center in New York in 1979 addresses his and his family's predicament:

> A high official of the political police has notified me that my family's departure from the country is entirely in my hands; that for it to happen I have to draft a letter denying my friends among intellectuals and poets abroad; that I have to forbid everyone, including newspapers and organizations, to speak or write about me and my literary works or even mention my name; and that I must disavow and deny every truth they have spoken in defending my situation. To write that letter would be to commit moral and spiritual suicide. I shall never write it!

When Valladares became very ill at the beginning of 1980, frightened prison officials gave him the medical care they had been withholding, but when the government discovered that the manuscript of a second book of his poems was about to be published abroad, the authorities returned him to his prison cell without regard for the effects on his health. In a letter he was able to smuggle out of prison, dated October 17, 1980, and addressed to the journalist Humberto Medrano in Miami, Valladares indicated that his condition was bound to worsen: "They hope that at a critical moment

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complications will develop from which I will die in an apparently accidental manner. It is common knowledge that medical treatment is used in Communist countries for coercion or elimination of unwanted prisoners. My own is just one case among many. I am being held incommunicado. In addition to all this I have not seen the sun in six months. Conditions are such that it will be even more difficult to stay alive."

Analyzed in its totality, Cuban literature since the revolution reflects the ideological changes that have occurred in the government. If literature is understood as having permanent value, as an expression of the human soul, as a means to explore new paths and analyze the world, and not merely as an instrument of propaganda or instruction, Cuban literature has unquestionably grown and diminished with the increase and reduction of official tolerance for the creative act. Although some critics struggle to search for traditional artistic values in works authorized by the censors, it is evident that in Cuba the printed word is now judged as an ideological weapon to change society and alter the course of history, and that the writer is to be regarded as an engineer of the soul.

Like Mao during the Cultural Revolution, the leaders of Cuba appear to have reached the conclusion that not only writers but literature itself, in the broadest sense, is always guilty of some transgression because it is inherently subversive. Thus, their aim seems to be to reach a state (which Marx predicted would come with the attainment of a Communist society) in which the writer will disappear and there will only be men and women for whom writing is merely another function of daily life. Castro has decreed that literature has no rights outside the revolution. The most expedient way to assure that literature can never reclaim its rights has been to silence, imprison, exile, and destroy writers. And literature itself.

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Edith Kurzweil

LETTER FROM ITALY

Italy is always full of surprise and chaos, but more so this time. I arrived on May 13, the day the Pope was shot, and before leaving two weeks later, the country had had a referendum, a major scandal which swept through the entire government and caused its fall, and the Christian-Democrats, with the "help" of the Socialist leader Bettino Craxi were about to lose the premiership for the first time in thirty-five years. Not all of these events, of course, were causally connected, but there were many implicit relationships, if only because of the way Italian economic and political institutions are structured.

If, for example, Mehemet Ali Agca, whose deed shocked the world, had not been apprehended immediately, and had managed to disappear amongst the tourists and believers who surround the Pope whenever he leaves his Vatican chambers, everyone would have thought that the attempt on the Pope's life had been engineered by the radical left, by antiabortionists who had good reason to be incensed by his interference in Italian politics—a breach of the Concordat between church and state—a few days before the May 17 referendum. Although the assailant was caught, the crime, of course, was not solved, and the only plausible motive might have been hatred of Catholicism by Muslim Turks, aggravated for Agca when the Pope visited Istanbul.

Yet as the Italian media continued to report and to comment around the clock, reality and fantasy often converged, and this was not surprising, given the possibilities of interpreting the absurdities and the horror of a terrorist act in a country with a number of right and left guerrilla organizations. For once, however briefly, politics was left aside, and Communist and Socialist leaders almost jumped the gun on the Catholics in condemning terrorism—in particular and in general—even before they discovered that Agca belonged to an international Fascist group. It still is not clear whether this group is not a cover-up for other connections.

Some Italians thought the left had to dissociate itself from this

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act immediately to win the five impending referenda, and particularly the referendum to retain the three-year-old law which legalizes abortion under very controlled and limited circumstances. In retrospect, one might argue that the large margin of their victory (68 percent on abortion) would indicate they could not have lost. But this is far from clear. The use of television, not only as propaganda, but as a means of education, turned out to be effective. And since the "right to life" movement got equal time, as did the forces for and against life imprisonment, the post-mortem editorial in *La Repubblica* concluded correctly that Italians had matured politically: nearly 80 percent voted; Christian-Democrats, though practicing Catholics, frequently disregarded their leaders' advice; and Italians—from industrialized northern cities to backward southern villages—talked about issues and convictions rather than party loyalty and slogans.

It has been argued that Italian democracy is too successful, that it is too open to anarchy, to fascism, to foreign influences, etc.; and that openness allows for the excesses of self-expression, for the manipulations leading to the perennial scandals, and ultimately, for the presence of terrorists like Agca. Though Agca himself is not an Italian creation, his presence in Italy does not seem fortuitous. It probably has been facilitated by the fact that Perugia's local government, for financial benefit, has allowed the construction of an Islamic center—including its own mosque—to accommodate approximately two thousand students, some of whom are members of extremist groups. But even before Agca's interrogations where he would come off as a clever idealogue rather than as an ordinary fanatic, the Italian press spoke of "the presence of international organizations which aim to subvert civil life, to fuel and extend conflicts between people and nations, to generate fear and violence and thus obstruct open discourse and the democratic process." Other statements, increasingly, linked terrorism, which now transcends "right" and "left" politics, to special, and hidden interests. And on May 23 *La Repubblica* reported specifically how, and through what channels, the Lybian government and the PLO had provided bombs, machine guns, and other munitions, for the most part Russian-made, to such terrorist groups as *Prima Linea* and *Metropoli* "without charging a cent"—"in order to destabilize Italy's social-political situation."

Italians are particularly prone to believing in conspiracy theories. But it is quite possible that in a country where chaos is the norm, many people can easily remember that "something violent happens" before every election and before every referendum,

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because calamities abound. Certainly, this time the "something" did not influence the outcome of the referendum, that is sympathy for the Pope was dissociated from papal politics. And there is enough evidence—from tourists' photos to false passport, from preassassination travel to unaccounted-for time, etc., to prove that Agca was backed by an organization, though we don't know whether he still served the PLO, Russian, Armenian, or Shiite interests, and whether he was paid by Gheddafi or by the proceeds from heroin traffic. For a few days, the Italian press speculated on all these possibilities, and a week later, while the police continued their inquiries, both Agca's motives and the Pope's health were relegated to page eight or twelve.

Nevertheless, international terrorism remained a major concern, as representatives of police forces from seventeen countries began their yearly meetings in Milan, and as there seemed to be a growing awareness of the fact that unemployed youth—in many countries—have increasingly given up on Marx and, instead, band together in Fascist activities, though fascism is illegal. Thus many Italians were glad that Agca turned out to be a foreigner, because very few of them would welcome another totalitarian regime such as Mussolini's; they value their freedoms, particularly of press and speech; many were shocked about reports that *Mein Kampf* was getting "popular" enough to be banned in Germany; and uneasy about their own right-wing youth.

One week after the attack on the Pope, the front page of every newspaper covered the imprisonment of seven of the most important Italian financiers—the first ones of that caliber to have been indicted for exporting large sums of money (at least one deal of thirty-six million dollars). Quite likely, the almost unexpected sophistication of the electorate—and especially its endorsement of the previously enacted emergency "law and order" decree against suspected terrorists—also encouraged the move against these powerful magnates, on the strength of information available for some time. Yet this turned out to have been only the outer layer of this scandal, which soon forced the resignation of the Forlani government. While looking into the "disappearance" of Michele Sindona, the failed financier, proof of the existence of a secret Masonic lodge—*Propaganda Due* (P2)—became public as did the list of its nearly thousand members which, as we now know, included the minister of defense, the secretary of the treasury, heads of police and the military, as well as other parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and functionaries of the state-run tele-

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vision network—mostly Christian-Democrats with a sprinkling of Socialists. Grand-Master Licio Gelli's organization chart—members had code names and knew only those belonging to their own cells—became available, although a suitcase of documents had been removed, leaving much room for speculation about the aims of P2. Later on, as witnesses began to testify, and Gelli had disappeared, he was not only linked to prominent Mafia bosses, NATO generals, and international bankers, but to former prime ministers Amintore Fanfani and Giulio Andreotti, so that membership in P2 seemed to be only the first step to the discovery of a larger political conspiracy. Essentially, the clandestine nature of this political organization, in a country where secret societies are outlawed, sparked the customarily vivid Italian imaginations. Personal histories of P2 members were being reexamined in line with the organization's scope, the combined power of whose "blood brothers" could easily effect a coup. At first it was speculated that even if no plan for such a coup would be found, the "lost" suitcase might contain one. Later on, the question was reversed: would it be worthwhile to set up such an elaborate network for any aim lesser than a government takeover? Already before the government was forced to step down, resignations had been demanded, and some were received. Many refused, protesting their innocence. When Gelli was reported to have been a confessed Fascist with underworld connections, the culpability of all P2 members seemed even more certain, especially as lists of "dues received" were produced, and as more and more festering scandals were examined from this new perspective.

Whereas some Italians perceived this super-scandal as no different from all the previous ones and expected that after a *rimpasto* (reshuffling) of the government corruption would continue and increase, others likened it to Watergate. That the Forlani government resigned because the morals of some of its leaders were questioned indicates, in a subtle way, that Italy is turning a corner. There are other indications as well. The timing and the fact that the names were publicized at all appear to point to the loss of power of the Christian-Democrats. And the May 20 kidnapping of a Montedison director by the Red Brigades, for instance, engendered a joint protest strike by members of all the local and regional unions. (After he was found dead, in the trunk of a car, on July 7, both workers and managers staged a nationwide strike against terrorism.) In view of the strong condemnation of both far-left and far-right terrorism by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) as well as by all the other "legiti-

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mate" political parties, such strikes may not be surprising. But they would negate the frequent claim by some of the left that terrorism in crowded places and in daylight could not occur without the tacit consent, or at least the widespread disaffection of a large number of citizens. The apprehension and trial of some of the Red Brigades seem to show that this organization is losing strength. Nevertheless, a number of kidnappers, including those of Aldo Moro, have not been apprehended and eradication of terrorism has been promised by campaigning politicians of every major party.

Accusations by the left against multinational corporations or against American imperialism also appear to have become less fashionable, and even the PCI has gone along with the proposed denationalization of Montedison. Five of the largest private holding companies, with the help of the government, had begun a complex maneuver to acquire an as-yet-undetermined percentage of the company's shares. Since nationalization of industry had always been pushed for by the PCI—the ideological justification that socialism is advancing peacefully—the party's increasing willingness to strengthen Italian economic structures would indicate that it has become "domesticated," has abandoned the revolution, and that it can now be trusted to further social democracy. All this would imply that the PCI, though internally split and responsive to signals from Moscow—at least in international politics—is attuned to an opinionated, involved, and for the most part informed electorate. Thus, the revolutionary stance, I believe, is at least partly a response to the party's perceived chances at the polls. And Mitterrand's success in France, and his policies in relation to the Communists, and to the nationalization of industries, is watched by all those Italians who are looking for radical change but don't quite trust the PCI.

Equally cynical about their politicians' and their bankers' honesty, many Italians expected that the recent disclosures, too, would be swept into the Tiber. So even as the proofs of inordinate greed for power and money kept mounting, many of them wondered why neither PCI nor PSI leaders, long ago, had asked the "hard" questions that would have indicted dishonest bankers (for the most part Christian-Democrats) along with their government officials—inside or outside of P2—and why only so few of the many culprits are being convicted.

Essentially, the Christian-Democrats miscalculated when they called for this recent referendum. Evocation of Don Sturzo's and De Gasperi's names no longer is helpful to politicians whose reputa-

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tions are soiled, who have proven their incompetence, and who have been in the center of many scandals. The Communists, though considered more honest and less trustworthy, have lost some of their votes and their credibility since 1976, when Eurocommunism began to appear less independent of Moscow than had been claimed, and when it became clear that except for carefully formulated censures of, for instance, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the PCI's foreign policy does not really differ from Moscow's. Italians, it is said, have become too enamored of democracy to swing to the far right, and too disenchanted with the post-1968 left to follow the radicals or the PDUP (a left splinter of the PCI) in large numbers. The Liberals (PLI) and the Republicans (PRI)—the only parties to have been on the winning side of every one of the five referenda—all along have been considered too parochial, local, or narrow to draw a large constituency. When President Pertini convoked the party leaders to discuss a reshuffling of the government, Craxi, who had discharged PSI functionaries belonging to P2, refused to participate. He wanted to demonstrate that his party stands for honesty, social progress, and Western-style democracy.

Neither Pertini (a Socialist) nor the Christian-Democrats wanted to call a general election, or to be without a government during the June administrative elections—the former because the country would be too long without leadership, and the latter because this would favor the Socialists. They could not manage to form another government, but did prevent Craxi from becoming premier—by favoring PRI's Spadolini. Still, Craxi's tactics paid off: in the June elections he "detached" over 4.5 percent of the voters from the "right" wing of the PCI—Italian Communists who distrust the Soviet Union—and from the "left" of the Christian-Democrats—"progress-oriented" Catholics—to enormously strengthen the PSI. As the trial of the bankers, and of other P2 personages progressed, as more and more evidence of corruption surfaced—implicating the heads of banks including the central Banca d'Italia, and connecting Christian-Democrat leaders and party finances to Sindona and Gelli—the need for the type of political and economic policies Craxi advocated became ever more evident. A major shake-up, of course, was long overdue; Italians had talked about it for years; and some of them had even known about P2. But this time there was too much proof, and the press (one of its most prestigious papers, *Corriere della Sera*, and the publisher Angelo Rizzoli had also been implicated) had furnished too much irrefutable evidence. Craxi's enemies—the

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Communists and radicals who accused him of being a minimalist and a social-democrat, those Christian-Democrats who perceived him as too "socialist," and big entrepreneurs who disliked his egalitarian slant—now attacked him for pushing his own career. He might have made a few more friends recently, by actively backing the Spadolini coalition, and by biding his time. Chances are that he will be asked to form the next government (the present one *is* shaky), or that the PSI will continue to gain adherents should the "anticipated" elections be necessary.

In any event, much will depend upon what happens under French socialism. For Craxi, who was summoned back from Mitterrand's inauguration, is likely to embrace the latter's policies, and to learn from his successes and failures. Because not only is Italy linked to the dollar, but Italians are sensitive to declarations by the American government, much will depend on the ability of our officials to refrain from foolish pronouncements. The perseverance of the prosecutors and the judges in the corruption trials also will be most crucial. But the real decisions, ultimately, are with the Italian electorate, with the same people who, in the recent referendum and in the administrative elections, voted with their conscience and intelligence. The question, basically, is to what extent a maturing electorate can eradicate the chaos and corruption at the top which has been going on for decades.

August 1981

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POEMS

Three Poems by Angel Cuadra

Translated by Donald Walsh

Variations on text by Kathleen Agena

COLLOQUY OF SADNESS

Through your cell you go, I through my song — Juana Rosa

At times I pretend that I am outside
and I take my bones out of these four walls,
Even the rain seems like sand
and one wants to prove to himself that he is alive,
for there are chains and chains . . . and you are helpless
with so many shackles.
But the clouds drift and one thinks:
"God is smiling". . . well, it's only a phrase.

I remove myself
as if I were pulling myself by the hair,
or as a drop that rises to the surface
and falls outside its glass.
And I seek your presence
you who comes to me in memory
you who has no face.
We set out walking like old
traveling companions
who usually say things that others do not understand
or are not interested in
a silly remark in the eye of reason
that leaves dialectics squinting.
For you, "because it is so fantastic, it is all the more natural,"
And I add . . . "and so good."
Then, I come back to reality as if stumbling on a stone

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I mean: I return, and with a fist
Vallejo's verse strikes me:
"no one knows where these four walls end."
You are the tissue of a poem
carried by the wind.
I am a stone of iron buried in the desert,
this is the truth, unexpected
"through my cell I go, you through your song."

POLICE EFFICIENCY

Poetry is the height of letters.
— Juana Rosa

Your poems are lost.
The house was empty
when they came in with arms, with orders,
with evil intentions
prying into corners
scattering papers across the floor,
a gust of terror.
They went looking for crimes, concealed in envelopes;
words that let their echoes trail
as the gossamer of the stars.
They found crimes like this:
"the first year of the dream,
we are poets, therefore we love,
as a child I remember a courtyard,
on my elbows in the rainbow,
the violet ash,
or April that stood on tiptoe to brush your angel . . . ."
And finally, they uncovered the consummate crime
the letter perfect crime:
under your name, which is "distance,"
your poems,
"the height of letters."

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VISION OF THE KEYS

I glimpse only
a skate rusted by tears
and a very black fountain with some keys
shining up from the bottom.
— Juana Rosa

I know the fountain in the courtyard of your house
the leaves that fall endlessly
the sky descending like calm.
I enter it
touched by hands
that took care of you as a child.

You were only the name,
the notice on the envelope,
an absence.

The echo remains and is barely audible:
your footsteps around the fountain,
your hands at the piano,
the wound of your life that is its voice,
the space of your body peopled by fish,
the seed of the poem that was going to be,
the keys in the water, eyeless.

Then came the ascending spiral, the vertigo,
the oracles like many roads.
And on one of those roads
our letters met
as if we had arrived one day
in the courtyard of your house
Now, from such distance
your poem arrives,
as if delivered from emptiness.
Time moves.

Love,
let us go as in a dream
to the edge of the fountain
and, among toys and Sundays, gathered from the bottom
we shall take the keys
that have been waiting there for centuries.

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Naomi Lazard

THE SECRET LIFE OF GHOSTS

After the last of the last goodbyes
when rain unwinds its beaded threads along the panes,
I come from the table of friends, still hungry
for what will never be offered again.
When birds in their nests are alone with their dreams
I open the window to let in the night,
its spirits who walk, hand in transparent hand.
They turn to each other without warning;
each one asks the same question at the same moment.

In the rains of our only season
Bamboo rattle their stalks and click
with the sound of furious needles knitting.
The lamps in the corridor are turned off;
only the wild arms of the rain are left,
fingers plaiting the loosened ends of wind.
While the trees on the lawn are lashed into tears
I hear those footsteps fall
at midnight on the glistening tiles.
We come to the edge of our own private precipice,
stand there and lean over.

After I've left and am left
with my striped bathrobe, my book
and two pillows side by side,
the tree killed by the storm is hacked up for firewood;
flames of a thousand matches make a single pyre.
We who were there and are no longer anywhere
sleep in our separate beds, each by its own river.
Our ghosts burn all their boats behind them.

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In the room nobody knows exists
but the birds who cleave to the morning air,
whose calls interpret the worshipping ways of love,
I wait with my feathery bones.
Deliberate as a genius
I turn the invisible key in the door
that opens the distance from here to any other star.
We go slowly, absorbed in the merest gesture,
into ordinary light.

Siv Cedering

IN THE LAND OF SHINAR

In the land of Shinar
The buildings grow more and more
Complex. The learned man who is
An expert in mass communications
Says: A civilization can be measured
By the permanence of its buildings.
On the receiving end of the television
Signal, I want to argue: What about
Ise? Is the permanence meant to be
in the idea or the construction?

It grows more and more difficult
To communicate. Our adult language
Is rich in words we can speak,
And spell, but understanding is
Illusive. The three letters of the
Marriage vow are easy to pronounce,
But the promise is challenged, when
The body proves to be impermanent.
"Until death do us part" is dismissed
As an embarrassing remnant from some

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Previous age, like God. The reason
For wanting to reach heaven is
Forgotten, yet the walls grow tall.
The materials determine the outcome.
Though we can see each other through
The glass, our words are muffled.
We have to fabricate the story, change
The "I said" and "you said" to "once
Upon a time, in the land of Shinar."
Maybe Ciardi was not such a fool

When he said that you cannot become
A poet in a language that is not
Your mother tongue. Maybe he wasn't
Discussing Latin, Hebrew or Russian.
Maybe he was talking about the need
For the simple language we spoke
As children, the one we use, or do not
Need to use, when we lie next to
Each other, spelling the word *home*—
And admitting that a discourse like

This is not necessarily a poem.
It is just the babble of someone who
Does not want to get lost in Babel,
When the only certainty regarding
The future of the flesh is its lack
Of future, someone who thinks that
The burning of the books should be
In the Alexandrian fire of the spirit,
Where human histories can be housed,
Reaching, or not reaching, to heaven.

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R.S. Levine

ISHMAEL, TELL US: WHAT WAS AHAB REALLY LIKE?

Well, he was no Queequeg.

You wouldn't want to take him to an opening
Of a chowder-house.

He was no social butterfly.
He had no manners.

If you were ever being chased
By Tripolitan pirates

You'd want him on your side.
He didn't know the meaning of the word "maybe,"

Only "yes" or "no."
When I asked him whom he hoped would become

The next President he spit in my face.
He didn't know the meaning of the word "fashion."

He lisped. He had trouble keeping his balance
When the ship rocked. Stormy weather

Drove him to drink. Sometimes
He couldn't hold his liquor. He had planned

To retire to his country estate and pen
His memoirs. Really, he had a lot

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On his mind. How many times had he
Polished his ivory stump?

He deserved compassion.
He never learned how to sleep

As well as he might. On a mild
Blue day he once muttered:

"A storm's a brewin', Ishmael."

Michael Braude

SCARECROWS

The angel of death, fearing their stark geometry,
does not approach within striking distance—
explaining, if in part, why scarecrows do not die
but are dispatched, instead, by the angel of dismemberment.
A more compassionate, more lovingkind seraph,
he, too, obeys his superiors and carries out every order
but never to the point of incapacitating scarecrows
so as to forestall their ghosts returning to pastures
where, rain or shine, they once did sentry duty.

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GOING TO THE MOVIES

Jonathan Baumbach

GODARD, GODARD, GODARD & DE PALMA

"They ain't quit doing it as long as I'm doing it," he said.
—Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*

There is much insistence these days in places like *The New York Times,* that "experimental" art (also called postmodern) is a thing of the past. The sighs of relief all but ruffle the pages. For some time, the word "experimental" in the context of the arts has been loaded against itself, has been a code word for pretension and obscurity. Radical art is the sworn enemy of the prevalent populist aesthetic: if it doesn't make money, if it doesn't persuade a large audience, it has no right to exist. Establishment culture has, of course, a large stake in opposing art that doesn't pay its way. The attack on experimentation is, in disguise, an attack against all art, against the uncompromised nature of art.

There are a few token "experimenters" on the public scene, however: Donald Barthelme in fiction and, after a hiatus of eight years, Jean Luc Godard in film. *Every Man for Himself*, which Godard calls his second first film, was the major event of the 1980 New York Film Festival, a radical work that establishment reviewers tended to domesticate in their muted appreciations. Godard is acceptable, if at all, as a returned prodigal, as a renegade that has recanted his apostasy.

Every Man for Himself opens with a long shot of a hotel room corridor and closes with an extended long shot (ex-wife and daughter walking away from the fallen protagonist). Entrance and exit circumscribe the film: the world revealed and the world dismissed. In between the mirror images of beginning and end is the trip into the mirror, a glimpse of hell (in the guise of Switzerland), the last stages of civilization as we are only beginning to know it. We follow the spasmodic movements of three characters, two women (Denise and Isabelle) and a man (Paul Godard) during a short, undefined

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period of time—the time sometimes out of sequence or confused. The characters, particularly Denise, are less stylized than those in much of Godard's earlier work, though they remain essentially opaque, their psychology irrelevant to the movement of the film. These characters are figures in a cityscape and often of secondary interest to the scape itself, to the images that compose it. The camera, in fact, moves away from the main actors on occasion to observe the passing scene. Although seemingly improvisational, *Every Man for Himself* is rigorously worked out, classical in its concern with form. Godard's disparate fragments come together into something new and complete.

There is in Godard's work a temperamental resistance to giving the audience what it perceives itself to want. Godard starts with a story in order to efface it until it is merely the clues to something impacted in the text. It's not that Godard is unconcerned with narrative (or can't tell a story, as his detractors claim), but that he doesn't want his audience mesmerized by empathy, doesn't want the image, and the ideas encoded in the image, adumbrated by story. If there's no dramatic expectation to keep us from fidgeting in our seats, the filmmaker has to make every moment of the film visually charged, has to replace the interest in what comes next with the discovery of what is. Godard anatomizes the vocabulary of cinema in order to rediscover the language as if no one had used it before. His films are exciting because, beyond their own self-discovered wonders, they take exemplary risks. If you can circumvent the wisest of received wisdom, if you can overturn the most sacred of accepted conventions, then what isn't possible?

Every Man for Himself is the most unrelentingly bleak of Godard's films, not apocalyptically bleak like *Weekend* but despairing and resigned. Lovers bruise one another. Self-concern precludes awareness of almost anyone else. At the same time, the surprise of the image exhilarates. Denise's attempted escape from the city, for example, is occasioned by the extraordinary stop-action shots of her bicycling in the country. The gesture of cycling, the process reperceived, is more important to Godard than the destination of the trip. In the world of this film there is no escape, nowhere to go. Similarly, in the film of this world we are not carried along from one sequence to another. *Every Man for Himself* is a mosaic composed of related cinematic fragments, is momentarily amusing or horrifying or beautiful or absurd or all of these. As there are no expectations in Godard's narrative, there is no future for his characters. Nothing

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comes next until it is there before our eyes, and then it is everything.

Isabelle's vagrant sexual activity, her impassive performance in the fantasies of others—degrading charades paid for by tired businessmen—becomes a metaphor for all human transactions in the film. It is also inescapably a metaphor for the director's relationship to his cast, to filmmaking itself. It suggests why Godard has stayed away so long. The authoritarian power of the director, his capacity for manipulation of actors and audience, disgusts Godard. If *Every Man for Himself* is harsh about contemporary decivilization, it is equally harsh about itself. Godard's pleasure in filmmaking—it is no wonder he can't stay away—is at odds with the moral statement his film wants to make. Impulse triumphs over puritanical vision. *Every Man for Himself* is intrinsically a celebration of filmmaking as art, a counterbalance to the hopelessness outside art. The world may be in the throes of moral decomposition but Godard sees its beauty, sees it everywhere. *Every Man for Himself* reaffirms by example that cinema is capable of wonders, that there are alternatives to the betrayal of vision, the denial of uniqueness, that animates ninety-eight percent of the films in current release.

2

A kind of debased populism is having its day in both politics and the arts. There has always been calculated manipulation in American films, sentimentality posing as humanism, but I can't remember a time when the predictable and second-rate were so widely admired. That intelligent reviewers can unequivocally embrace such featherweight banalities as *Melvin and Howard*, *It's My Turn* and *Ordinary People*—the first at a considerably higher level of skill than the other two—seems either a willful betrayal of standards or a conversion to spurious sincerity as an aesthetic value.

In my view the four most admirable American films of the past year, 1980, all somewhat or seriously flawed, were Paul Schrader's *American Gigolo*, Woody Allen's excessively maligned *Stardust Memories*, Richard Rush's *The Stunt Man*, and the controversial *Dressed to Kill* by Brian De Palma. All are celebrations or anatomies of filmmaking. *Dressed to Kill*, which is my favorite of the four, has either been admired to death or loathed beyond provocation. Much has been made of De Palma's connection to Hitchcock, the homages and borrowings, the variation on themes. In terms of vision and sensibility, *Dressed to Kill* is about as much like *Psycho* as *Breathless* is like Howard Hawks's *Scarface*, which is one of that film's inspirations. De

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Palma plays changes on Hitchcock's obsessive themes (*Psycho* and *Rear Window* for *Sisters*, *Vertigo* and *Rebecca* for *Obsession*, and *Psycho* and *Rear Window* again for *Dressed to Kill*), but it is Godard's inventiveness and wit that inspires De Palma's *mise en scene*. Although De Palma's films tend to accommodate the narrative demands of commercial cinema, they tend also to use narrative as occasion for the elaboration of images.

Dressed to Kill opens as the camera moves through a plush, somewhat sterile modern apartment, focusing momentarily on a cactus and then moving headlong into the sanctuary of the bathroom where we discover—we have become voyeurs despite ourselves—an attractive middle-aged woman (Angie Dickinson) taking a shower. The shower spray seems to caress the woman as she caresses herself, her face rapt with pleasure. She is caught up in a sexual fantasy (whose privacy we violate), while the scene, heavily stylized, almost parodied, is a cinematic fantasy in itself, evoking the famous shower scene in *Psycho*, and so informed by the tension of potential violence. We notice a man, naked to the waist, at the sink shaving. The smarmy music heightens. The fantasy—the woman's, ours, the film's—moves toward some kind of climax. Abruptly a black-gloved hand clamps itself around Dickinson's mouth. The woman lets out a scream: the sexual fantasy turns on the fantasist, and startles us from our voyeuristic participation. The mode of the film is defined. No privacy is inviolable, the secret life of De Palma's characters (his women in particular) might at any moment enact itself before our eyes. *Dressed to Kill* is not so much frightening as tense and unnerving. We are in an invented world in which the imagination, at its most highly charged, becomes manifest. It is a world in which sex and violence have become confused, a world informed by the puritanical superstition that sexual desire invites punishment.

After spending an exhilarating afternoon with an anonymous lover who picks her up in an art museum in the film's most brilliant sequence, Dickinson discovers that the man has venereal disease, punishment for her transgression. It is as if the first scenario were being reenacted in variation then carried a step further. And then further still. Where the imagined sex ends with imagined violence, the real experience generates a real (within, one must reiterate, the fantasy context of the film) reprisal. A man dressed as a woman (an illusory woman) attacks Dickinson with a knife in the elevator, a gory scene filmed with a stylistic exaggeration that distances us from it. Sex in *Dressed to Kill* is punished by humiliation and death (or by

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fantasies of humiliation and death).

The point-of-view character of the first half of the film, Dickinson is replaced by a young prostitute (Nancy Allen) who witnesses the killing. Having seen the murderer, Allen inherits his/her enmity and pursuit, inherits Dickinson's role in the film. Allen's tion between the two women — though mostly different, they are also secret sharers — holds *Dressed to Kill* as narrative together. though mostly different, they are also secret sharers—holds *Dressed to Kill* as narrative together.

De Palma's voluptuous pop art style (a combination of Russ Meyer and Jean Luc Godard) is rich with comic exaggeration, insisting on the illusionary nature of the action. What's most upsetting about *Dressed to Kill* is not the violence, which is stylized and mocked, but how the film repeatedly catches us off guard and implicates us in behavior that violates our sense of propriety. Although we know that *Dressed to Kill* is make believe—a fantasy about fantasies—we are also aware that there's something anarchic in its movement, that anything can happen at any moment, a free-floating expectation predicated by the opening scene. Nothing stands up to close scrutiny in De Palma's film—plot elements are determinedly illogical—yet it works as illusion, has the power and appropriateness of a dream.

The sensational nature of De Palma's material permits him to deal with it in a complex and personal way. *Dressed to Kill* is a film both about the imaginative possibilities of film (its Godardian legacy) and an illustration of the power of the cinema as nightmare. The two shower fantasies frame the narrative, the second a reprise in variation on the first. We are taken in both times, deceived by the conjurer even after we know the trick. De Palma has not been imitating Hitchcock—comparisons between them are pointless—but commenting on Hitchcock, reimagining his materials to make films of wholly different sensibility and implication.

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COMMENTS

Erika Apfelbaum

FORGETTING THE PAST*

The sequence of events

On June 1 and 2, 1981, a somewhat unusual trial took place in Paris when a civil suit was brought before the court by two antiracist organizations, LICRA (International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism) and MRAP (Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among Peoples). Backed by several other organizations of former deportees, children of deportees, and members of the Resistance, they took Robert Faurisson, a professor at the University of Lyon II, to court, charging him with willfully distorting history. Faurisson had claimed that the gas chambers never had existed for the purpose of killing Jews, and that the Holocaust never took place.

Faurisson is the French representative of a small, but increasingly vocal group which has been attempting to get international recognition as an alternative historical school. Their efforts have focused on rewriting the history of the Holocaust and denying its existence—this has earned them the label "no-Holocaust revisionists." In France, the name of Faurisson and the revisionist interpretation first sprang into public view in late 1978. Darquier de Pellepoix, the former Commissioner of Jewish Affairs in the Vichy regime, had declared in an interview in the newsmagazine *L'Express* (November 4, 1978) that "only lice had been gassed in Auschwitz." There was considerable discussion of this in the media, and on December 28, 1978, the daily newspaper *Le Monde* published an article

* Ian Lubek, University of Guelph, Canada, assisted in the translation of this article.

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by Faurisson about "the rumor of Auschwitz," which concluded: "The non-existence of the 'gas chambers' is good news for poor humanity, good news that one should no longer keep concealed." The article unleashed heated debates, especially in the press. At the University of Lyon, it led to classroom disruptions and Faurisson was suspended from his teaching post. At the time, a petition was circulated and signed by a number of North American scholars, including Noam Chomsky and Alfred Lilienthal, demanding that everything be done "to ensure his safety and the free exercise of his legal rights."*

In response to the "good news" announced by Faurisson, LICRA and MRAP jointly brought suit against him in February, 1979, under Article 382 of the French Civil Code, dealing with civil responsibility. The trial was not intended to impose censorship, nor was the court asked to rule on the question of historical truth (about what is true or false and who is right or wrong). Rather, the question involved the historian's civil responsibility for the social consequences that ensue from ignoring or distorting documents in one's writing. When the case came to trial in June, 1981, Robert Badinter, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs, introduced the case by saying that Faurisson had "failed in all his duties" and was being prosecuted for his methods, his omissions, and the blatant distortions which bore consequences and had repercussions for which he was civilly responsible. In his closing summation, Badinter argued: "Freedom of speech indeed, but freedom is closely related to responsibility." The issue, in other words, was that Faurisson should not be able to invoke the privilege of free speech for lies that he uttered, especially when these have social consequences. But the specific legal arguments for such a trial testing the civil responsibility of a (revisionist) historian are just one aspect of this story. My personal interest lies in addressing some broader meanings in these events.

As preparation for this trial, Faurisson wrote a book entitled *Mémoire*** *in Defense—Against Those who Accuse Me of Falsifying History-The Question of the Gas Chambers,* and this was issued in 1980 by the libertarian publishing house La Vieille Taupe. (Pierre Guilaume,

*See Serge Thion, *Vérité historique ou vérité politique? le dossier de l'affaire Faurisson. La question des chambres à gaz.* (Paris: La Vieille Taupe, 1980), p. 163.

***Mémoire* has several meanings, including memory, memorial, dissertation, report, and in the legal sense, an abstract to the case, and hence is left in the French.

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the publisher, had earlier brought out in French the book entitled "Historical truth or political truth? The dossier of the Faurisson affair. The question of the gas chambers."* This had been written by sociologist Serge Thion of the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research) in collaboration with others, including Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, brother of Daniel. The book had a long introduction by Thion to explain his position, and a large selection of Faurisson's writings).

In *Mémoire in Defense*, Faurisson claimed that the well-known scholar of the history of anti-Semitism and of Holocaust studies, Léon Poliakov, had falsified history, and this statement resulted in Faurisson's being summoned to court on May 29, 1981, for the first** of three trials. But it was perhaps the book's preface by Noam Chomsky, entitled "Some rudimentary comments on the right to freedom of expression," that provoked the strongest reaction. Chomsky attacked French intellectuals, blaming them for their totalitarian tendencies. He cited the collaboration with Germany, the influence of Leninism, and the existence of the New Right. On the issue of civil liberties, he reaffirmed the general principle of the absolute necessity of defending freedom of speech, and cited supporting examples of petitions he had signed in favor of Russian dissidents with whom he was in complete political and ideological disagreement. As for Faurisson, Chomsky acknowledged that he knew little about his work and expressed no opinion on the subject itself, since on these matters he claimed to have no "special enlightenment." About Faurisson's "alleged 'antisemitism'," Chomsky said he had found no proof to permit such a conclusion; for him, Faurisson was a "kind of relatively apolitical liberal."

Very few people have actually read Chomsky's statement. However, since Chomsky is well known and respected in France as a scholar and a political thinker, the association of his name with that of Faurisson brought wide publicity to the issue. This public concern was probably increased by the bombing of the synagogue on the Rue Copernic in Paris.

The media resonate to the general interest in these issues, and one of the repercussions of the renewed publicity was the appearance of Faurisson on radio station Europe I, where he was interviewed

* This is the English title of the book noted earlier.

**Charged with defamation under the penal code.

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(December 17, 1980) on a program with a wide audience. He claimed to be able to summarize his position in about sixty words: "The alleged myth of the gas chambers and the alleged genocide of the Jews are one and the same historical lie which has made an enormous political and financial fraud possible. Its principle beneficiaries are the State of Israel and international Zionism, while the principle victims are the German people (but not the German rulers) and the entire Palestinian people." This declaration went far beyond the bounds of scholarly debate about historical facts which Faurisson constantly claimed he wished to initiate. Faurisson accused the Jews of a major swindle. In a shocking reversal of roles, the Jewish community was suddenly accused of being the perpetrators of the crimes of which they had been in fact the victims. "Have Cambodian or Algerian victims ever been labelled executioners?" asked MRAP's lawyer, Rappoport, during the third trial. MRAP, in conjunction with LICRA, this time brought suit against Faurisson under the penal code—specifically the law of 1972 against incitation to racial hatred. This trial, conducted like the previous civil case in the absence of Faurisson, took place on June 24 and 25, 1981.

Faurisson's fallacies

Faurisson's argument could fill an anthology of logical fallacies. Basically the technique is to start from an apparent factual contradiction which is then cited as proof of the "no-Holocaust" hypothesis, while no further effort is made to gather additional information that could account for this contradiction. A few examples may suffice.

According to documents, Simone Veil (née Jacob), the current president of the parliament of the European Economic Community, had been deported to Auschwitz in 1944 on transport number 71 from France. Usually, on arrival at Auschwitz, records were kept only for those "entering" the camp; no lists of names exist for those who were sent directly from the transport trains to the gas chambers. Therefore, since none of the women from transport number 71 had been registered on arrival, it was believed for some time that they had all immediately been gassed. Faurisson uses the fact that Simone Veil is alive today as an illustration of his argument that there is no evidence of gassing. He does not even attempt to explore other possibilities, such as disruptions in the German bureaucratic practices at a late stage of the war. It is well known that the Nazis made systematic use of such euphemistic expressions as "final solution," "shower bath," "special action" to conceal their deeds. For

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George Kren and Leon Rappoport, euphemistic language "facilitates the reification of atrocious activities into acceptable and routine operations."* The use of these euphemisms also serves Faurisson's revisionist purposes. After endless quibbling, he simply rejects the recognized meaning of "Sonderaktion" as the selection process for the gas chambers by the SS camp doctors upon arrival of new transports in Auschwitz. A rereading of the diary of Kremer, who was a doctor at Auschwitz in September and October 1942, convinces Faurisson that Kremer had to deal with the epidemic of typhus during these special actions (Sonderaktion) rather than with selection for gassing. But then he remains strangely silent and unconcerned about the fate of all those who never did enter the camp—where are they? The question does not exist for Faurisson. And he denies any validity to Kremer's later testimony. According to Faurisson, Kremer had been imprisoned in Poland; therefore, he now recites "lessons learned in Polish jails."

And, in general, revisionist historians claim that the testimonies of the Nazis cannot be trusted either, because at the Nuremberg trials they were subject to the purpose of the Allied prosecutors, which was to provide, for propaganda reasons, accounts that demonstrated the enormity and horror of genocide.

The meaning of the "no-Holocaust revisionism"

As I've argued elsewhere, current Jewish history is deeply rooted in Auschwitz as the general symbol of the destruction of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. For someone whose past is rooted in Auschwitz, the experience of reading through the revisionists' tortured logic and documentation is similar to the psychologically disorienting experience of sensory deprivation experiments or of solitary confinement in prison, where one loses touch with reality. The insidious effect of reading this literature is ultimately to lose one's identity as a survivor and, more generally, as a Jew. Therefore, the revisionist allegations serve to dispossess the Jews from their history, and in so doing, in seeking to destroy a people's history, a symbolic genocide replaces a physical one. An example is the fact that Faurisson had previously devoted much time (in particular with his students at the University of Lyon) to demonstrating

* George M. Kren and Leon H. Rappoport, *Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behavior* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980).

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that Anne Frank's diary was flawed. Now this book has served to introduce several postwar generations of teenagers to the story of the Holocaust. The demonstration that Anne Frank's diary is a forgery would, for Faurisson, increase any suspicion about the existence of the Holocaust itself.

Revisionism: why now?

It is probably not accidental that the revisionist claim of the nonexistence of the Holocaust gains an audience at exactly the time when there is a growing search in France for a genuine renewed Jewish identity, and when in the worldwide Jewish community there is an immense revival of the memory of the Holocaust, epitomized by the recent gathering in Jerusalem—"the first and the last"—of the survivors of the Holocaust. For many years, the events of the Holocaust were passed over in silence, except by scholars and a few indomitable spirits, such as Elie Wiesel. A sort of amnesia, half deliberate and half unconscious, seemed to have overtaken everyone. The survivors remained silent either because no one would listen to them (as many today confess), because they were unable to convey the horror, or because they (we) again had to learn to live normally. Feelings of culpability (for having been passive or impotent to prevent anything) served to enforce a censorship on memory as well as to encourage anti-Semitic tendencies. Today, forty years later, the Holocaust is just a part of history. The release of memory among the survivors, who are now all well over forty, offers the last chance to bear witness to what really happened. But as time helped reactivate memory, by the same token, it loosened the censorship against anti-Semitism, and created an opening through which revisionism could creep in.

Parallel to these psycho-social processes one also has to consider the historical and political climate of these last few years. Indeed, the growing strength of revisionism does not occur in a political vacuum. France, in particular, from 1977 on was suffering from growing unemployment and economic crises. Until the recent election, the left had been in a moral and political decline. The right, the "*Nouvelle Droite,*" was growing. Racism was on the increase. The impunity with which neo-Nazis and other (sometimes unidentified) groups were able to operate, bears witness to the kind of freedom that existed for the right. At the time of the bombing of the synagogue on the Rue Copernic, there were well over 200 unpunished attacks.

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The lawsuits initiated in such a climate can thus be seen to have a truly political dimension. Beyond the judicial procedures, it was the historical condition of French society in the late 1970s and its modes of functioning which were really being questioned. Faurisson, or more precisely his sudden visibility, can be seen partly as a product of a certain society. In bringing suit against him, one forces the society, through its judicial institutions, to judge its own perversity. A trial can be interpreted as a sort of barometer of the court's position on the prevailing norms and standards of a current government. For example, during the third trial of Faurisson—for incitation to racial hatred—MRAP's lawyer, Rappoport, was quite explicit about the political implications of the trial and deplored the tolerance displayed by the courts in other cases. Here the public prosecutor took the trouble to remind the court that it was he who had previously instigated legal action against Frederiksen, the leader of FANE—formerly one of the leading neo-Nazi groups.

It may also be noted that the recent evolution of French domestic politics has altered somewhat the contextual framework surrounding the legal actions. The original events and the initiation of lawsuits took place during the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; the various trials and their judgments occurred shortly after François Mitterrand assumed that office. During the second trial, for example, Robert Badinter, soon to be Minister of Justice, was among the lawyers pleading on behalf of the civil plaintiffs—LICRA, MRAP, and others.

In stressing the political meaning and context of the suits against revisionism, one should not minimize its other aspects—particularly the psycho-social. Thus within the general political climate prevailing in France during these last few years, the decision to engage Faurisson in public trials—one, a civil suit—may be understood as a distress signal from a community refusing to fall again into the "fallacy of innocence." This term is used by Kren and Rappoport to characterize the attitudes of the Jewish community during World War II. In seeing themselves as innocent victims of the forthcoming persecution, the Jews had failed to acknowledge and recognize their existential state of victim *per se*. They thus had failed to undertake effective action for fear that such action would discredit their primary claim of innocence.

I would suggest that undertaking these legal actions against Faurisson can also be understood as an attempt to escape this "fallacy of innocence," once and for all. "In this history which is ours, the

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burden of lies has always cost us humiliation and then death," said Badinter. And this is why it is impossible to remain silent today, even if, as Badinter noted in his opening address, taking part in the debates is some kind of sacrilege or insult to those who died.

Unravelling the reasons that led to the trials is one thing; fully subscribing to them is another. While a penal lawsuit on charges of incitation to racial hatred seems to me to be unambiguous and totally justified, a civil lawsuit on the falsification of history is more debatable and less clear. For at one point or another, one is forced onto the territory of one's opponent. The tables are turned and one ends up being forced to give justifications for historical events, to answer an accusation which is itself the product of falsification. In answering those who deny the existence of the Holocaust, the burden suddenly shifts and we are forced to prove the truth of the deaths of our parents. While no one denies that there is still much to be explored in the history of that period, this does not imply that what we know (or have lived) is false. Better to have remained silent—to have resisted replying to that provocation? But it was no longer possible to maintain silence. The result: an insoluble dilemma.

The converts of revisionism

A growing number of people seem to be touched by, drawn into, or even converted to the revisionist arguments. Nor does the "no-Holocaust" epidemic affect only one type, but it seems to reach a diverse group of people, many quite idiosyncratic. If we examine, for example, the conversion of the libertarian group—Guilaume, the La Vieille Taupe publisher; Thion, the CNRS sociologist who defines himself a materialist; Cohn-Bendit; and others—their acceptance may be understood within a given ideological framework. They deny the gas chambers, but they deny as well the idea of the genocide itself. (I am not even sure that they would agree to the statement by one of Faurisson's lawyers that "the Holocaust should remain a useful metaphor.")

From the introduction to Thion's book, one gains some understanding of the libertarians' support for Faurisson's statements, which at first glance seems puzzling and unexpected. Thion, like Chomsky, takes a strong stand against the way the Western world disseminates distorted information for propaganda purposes; historical myths may thus be created by exaggeration of official death figures, as has been the case in Cambodia, for example. Or they

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may be created by omission: in an interview in *Change*, Chomsky pointed out, for instance, that no one in France raised the question of the Indonesian genocide going on in Timor because France had extensive vested interests in this part of the world. Thus we have access to political truth rather than to historical truth. For Thion, trying to build a general case about historical mystifications, the Holocaust example is didactically useful and handy. If one can demonstrate that such an emotionally charged, widely accepted, large-scale genocide has been subject to similar distortions for a variety of reasons—distortions in testimony by the survivors due to emotional factors, distortions by the Nazis at the Nuremberg trials because of the propaganda purposes of the Allies—it then becomes easier to make a more general claim that history in the West, and not just in the Soviet Union, is ideologically biased.

Within this perspective, the number of converts increases. Thus by the third trial, Faurisson's lawyer produced the ethnologist Karnoouh from the CNRS as a witness. He was one of two token Jewish witnesses to be asked by the lawyer at the beginning of questioning: "Do you belong to the group commonly known as the Jews?" Following this loaded introduction, Karnoouh suggested that "all the evil should not be borne only by one group; let us distribute it equally between the Germans and the Soviets." When asked who the beneficiaries might be, besides Israel, of the so-called fraud attributed to the Jews, he replied: "the two imperialisms which rule us—the Russian and the American." Perhaps then, the main issue for this group of converts seems to be to rid themselves of the albatross of the Holocaust as the quintessential evil, to leave room for the two major imperialist evils.

Another factor conducive to the spread of revisionism is a simple-minded anticommunism. There are those who question the gas chambers on the ground that they had been "discovered" exclusively in the areas liberated by Soviet armies. They were therefore likely to be just a fabrication of the Soviets to draw attention away from their own deeds.

But how can one explain the case of the children of nonsurvivors who have joined the revisionist camp? Perhaps there is at work some psychological mechanism for a strong denial of reality.*

* Various forms of denial were common among the Hiroshima survivors. Cf. R.J. Lifton, *Death in Life* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1967).

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Perhaps the monstrous realities may be too frightening for some to cope with. From my own experience, I know that a sense of despair comes when one confronts these events once again, some forty years later—even if only through intensive readings. As Kren and Rappoport warn: "Those who gaze deeply into the Holocaust may find themselves, if not turned to stone, then at least profoundly changed."

A final look to the courtroom. In all three cases, the verdicts were against Faurisson. On the charges of willful distortion of history, Faurisson was judged to be civilly and morally responsible, and he was sentenced to pay the symbolic one franc in damages demanded in the civil suit. On the charge of "incitation to racial hatred," he was sentenced to three months of imprisonment (with reprieve) and various fines.

At the institutional level, these judicial decisions seem correct and in accordance with the normal order of things. But let us not close the book on the revisionists and shelve the legal files just yet. The case is not closed as long as the myths, fabrications, distortions, or rumors disseminated by Faurisson and other revisionists remain alive, in France, and elsewhere.*

* In the Superior Court for the State of California for the County of Los Angeles, Case #C-356542, filed in February 1981, Mel Mermelstein vs. Institute for Historical Review et. al., is a civil action involving six causes, among them: breach of contract, libel, intentional infliction of emotional distress, declaratory relief, and injurious denial of established fact.

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Michael Kustow

AMERICAN THEATRE: AN ENGLISH VIEW

Taking leave from the familiar, tidy landscapes of the British and European theatre to spend a year working in America, I've once again been elated by the edge and urgency and exuberance of American and especially New York theatre, and dismayed by its hurry and hype, its abrupt lurches into awfulness, its kleptomaniac imports. None of these virtues or failings are unique to the American theatre, of course, but they seem to have a distinct quality here, a hothouse profusion and suddenness. While I was still trying to puzzle out what was special about that, America changed presidents, and I found myself in what, all disclaimers notwithstanding, seems like a rerun of aspects of Margaret Thatcher's Britain: supply-side economics, including cuts in government funding for the arts. The way these cuts have been proposed and opposed has given me a clue to the volatile quality of American theatre and, since theatre is the most social art, of the arts in general in this society. It is the lack of what I can only call a public dimension.

In Britain, the public spending cuts have begun to bite into the arts. Beginning this past spring, forty clients of the Arts Council of Great Britain, the equivalent of America's National Endowment for the Arts, will no longer receive grants and, in Britain's chilly economic spring, may not survive. The victims include such famous names as the Old Vic company, and such worthwhile institutions as the National Youth Theatre, which gave actors such as Derek Jacobi and Jane Seymour their early opportunities. But, comparing Britain's arts funding cuts with America's, one crucial difference strikes me.

When the Arts Council of Great Britain takes a 2 percent budget reduction, particular arts and companies, judged on the quality of their work, are penalized. However, the principle that the arts are part of the public good, potentially accessible to all, and thus a defensible charge to all taxpayers, is not fundamentally challenged. That has been a bipartisan policy in my country for more than thirty years. And that is why the British government spends six

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times more per capita on the arts than the American government. When the NEA takes a 50 percent budget cut—a cut which is proportionately greater than for any other agency—the principle of the arts as an integral part of the public good, never securely grounded in America to begin with, looks decidedly shaky.

It's not just a question of finding alternative money for the arts. Despite its woes, the American economy contains more sources of sponsorship and philanthropy than does Great Britain's. But, without significant "pump priming" of federal funds, the arts lose a vital sanction and justification. Federal funding has, in fact, never been more than symbolic, averaging around 5 percent of the subsidy needs of its clients as against the 50 percent or more provided by most British and European government grants. Yet, U.S. federal funding has been important just for being a symbol of the nation's belief that the arts matter, a signal to other sectors of the community with resources to deploy that America's center of authority acknowledges the arts as a public need.

Now that sanction is going to be undermined. The savage percentage reduction in the NEA budget symbolically redefines the arts as a consumer want, a special interest whose enthusiasts can fend for themselves. Much the same attitudes underlie the pruning of public broadcasting, and the suggestion that privately purchased cable television can make up the deficiency in public provision.

The truly needy will not suffer, say the pundits of the new economic order. But when it comes to the arts, who are the truly needy? We all are, perhaps now more than ever. In times of trouble, as the British found out during World War II when the foundation of its Arts Council was laid, people certainly want escape. But they also want the truth, the deep reality and the fortification that art can give. "Oh, reason not the need," cries King Lear in the storm. What he says applies to the need for the arts. It is not blatant, like the need for health or roads or literacy. It is latent; once awakened, it grows by what it feeds on.

Perhaps such ideas go against the American grain. America's ancestors were the Puritans who shut Shakespeare's theatre, and ancestral Puritan negation runs close beneath contemporary permissiveness. America's immense practicality may be uneasy with nonutilitarian things like the arts, and rushes to turn them into something that counts, like business or property or social status. Conversely, the religious, nonconformist side of the American character, again Puritan and Protestant in origin, is ever ready to make

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art sacramental, a lofty cultural experience or a holy, counter-cultural act. America's sturdy individualism is suspicious of the collective nature of the performing arts in particular, prefers stars to ensembles, solitary creators to durable artistic groups. And superimposed on these attitudes is the powerful apparatus of the most vigorous consumer capitalism in the world, selling products to markets.

How does this inheritance affect the American theatre? I think it has undermined the possibilities of making an audience. Whenever I've attended an American theatre during these past six months—and those visits have included commercial, "institutional," and *avant-garde* theatres— I've had the feeling that I haven't been sitting in a real audience. And I've come to the conclusion that, by and large, the American theatre at this moment doesn't have an audience. It has customers, subscribers, or acolytes, but it doesn't seem to me to have a sizeable, dedicated, informed body of theatregoers who come to a play with openness to the unfamiliar, and for whom a night out at the theatre is as natural as going to the movies.

The feel and flavor of a house full of playgoers can give clues about the status of theatre in any society. British audiences tend to be attentive but unassertive, though capable of peaks of emotion and glee. French audiences are acute, expert, explosive, voluble. American audiences are either hyperreactive or stonily defiant, aggressively opinionated or at a loss for words. They are also immensely susceptible to critics writing like racehorse tipsters, and to saturation advertising—the sheer volume of which hits a newcomer with raucous force.

Of course, all audiences have their failings. The typical London audience errs towards coziness and timidity. The Paris audience is prone to cultural chauvinism and intellectual impatience. The typical New York audience often strikes me as being on its guard, like a customer who wants to be sure his experience meets the claims made on its behalf. So, if theatre in Britain is typically perceived as tradition and custom, in France as classic form or radical discovery, in America it's seen as basically another competitive product.

Outside the dominant commercial theatre, the audiences I've been part of don't seem to form a significant, fully public alternative. In the *avant-garde* theatre, for instance, the staple audience is a congregation of the dedicated, the aesthetic equivalent of early Christian sects—until the vanguard becomes chic and the art crowd moves in. The *avant-garde* adventure can become a trip from secrecy

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to celebrity with no stops in between. The fact that so many of the most vivid and penetrating images of America's experimental theatre speak to subjectivity and address apartness only adds to the piquancy of the situation. Paradoxically, America's theatrical *avant-garde* is both disaffected from the values of the entertainment industry, and—to judge by the work of Sam Shepard or Lee Breuer—draws on them for its counterstatements; a sign, perhaps, of how the market haunts even the imagination.

The nonprofit, institutional or residential theatres also suffer from a lack of public dimension. Indeed, the multiplicity of their labels reflects the instability of their position. Because of inadequate funding, most nonprofit American theatres are run on a subscription basis. This makes them not fully public entities because a subscription audience is not a proper public alternative to a commercial market. Subscription replaces the manipulated automatism of marketing with another kind of governed behavior: blanket commitment in advance to a season of plays known only by their blurbs on a prospectus. And if the commercial theatre is always in search of familiar novelty, subscription also encourages predictability. Pepper your repertoire with Ibsen, Shakespeare, and Chekhov (as many orchestras do with Mozart, Beethoven, and Mahler), and you will probably attract the core of subscribers—and cash up front—which your precariously noncommercial theatre needs. But reinterpret these authors' plays—many of which challenged and shocked upon first appearing—in any rigorously fresh way, as a living theatre must, and you risk offending the very expectations which led your audience to subscribe in the first place.

Theatres are not like symphony orchestras, opera or ballet companies, which flourish and are deeply appreciated in many American cities. There are vital differences between performing Mozart, Mahler, or Verdi and staging Shakespeare, Molière, or Ibsen. Music, opera, and ballet are purified arts, eternal rather than timebound, speechless, distilled. While drama may aspire to the condition of music, it remains vernacular, earthbound, tied to the creaturely human body, a tenant of time and place. It shows to the age, in that endlessly mysterious phrase of Hamlet's, "its form and pressure."

Drama can be a sounding board for the forms and pressures of successive ages in a way that music cannot. Sometimes Shakespeare or Racine can say as much about being alive now as any contemporary playwright. A play, as well as being impeccably performed, like

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a symphony, must vibrate with the passions and perceptions of the time and place of its performance if it is to come to life. Perhaps people flock to concerts, opera, and ballet because they provide solace and uplift, a momentary escape from the unpredictable forms and violent pressures of our age. Good drama cannot so easily lift off from the taut fabric of contemporary life; it is harder than ever for it to supply satisfying symmetry and harmonious endings. Where the wordless arts comfort and elevate, serious drama confronts and troubles.

But the way American theatre works now obliges even those most dedicated to serious drama to collaborate with its contrary—by packaging and promoting in ways scarcely distinguishable from the commercial world. Thus is the unique public encounter with drama undermined, the presence of a play here and now lessened. Sometimes, America the limitless seems to offer almost too much freedom to convert anything into something else, profitably.

Perhaps my quest for this elusive public dimension of theatre is quixotic, but my best experiences all tell me that drama reaches its heights when the theatre is fully accessible to all parts of society. Nor can I rid myself of the conviction that the arts are something we possess in common. I inherited this belief from generations of British visionaries and practical idealists, from William Blake to Matthew Arnold. Their principles and actions led to the creation of a network of publicly-funded theatres, orchestras, libraries, and museums with which I and my contemporaries grew up, and to which we felt we had a right.

That is where my idea of a natural public dimension comes from; and being in America, where it is missing, has made me fully realize the meaning I attach to it: that the theatre paramountly, and with it all the arts, is not an exclusive privilege but a privilege held in common.

Although good drama today probably has to confront and disturb, it also confirms, reminds, and can unite. A play can pass beyond its initially troubling impact to hold an audience together in a perception of life which, however disconcerting or implacable, is less crushing because it is truly shared by members of that audience. And that marks the truths which the artist puts forward from the insistent and widely-disseminated ideas with which pundits and politicians attempt to remodel our world.

"Perhaps good art tells us more about our lives and our world than any other kind of thinking or speculation—it certainly speaks to

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more people," says Socrates in Iris Murdoch's new Platonic dialogue, *Art and Eros*. Art speaks to more people only if it is enabled to do so. If the serious theatre in this country acts as a mere embellishment or cave dweller of society, if it fails to seek out the strongest encounter with the widest cross section of people, and instead succumbs to fashion, cultural snobbery, passionate and partisan intensities, the complacency of a commodity, or any of the other alibis which fill the void of a missing public dimension, then it will be that much closer to dwindling into just another consumer want, toward which the new economic order and so many other forces in America are pushing it. And then the particular thrust and strut of American theatre which so many of us admire, the urgency with which America's best art makes its statements without the shelter of tradition or classicism or habit, will be that much more confined.

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BOOKS

POPULAR AND UNPOPULAR MUSIC

MUSIC AFTER MODERNISM. By Samuel Lipman. Basic Books, Inc. $11.95.

Music After Modernism chants a familiar refrain: music is woefully in decline. Samuel Lipman joins the procession of the prophets of doom who have a long history in the arts, but his particular orientation places him in a tradition that goes back only about half a century to such books as Ernest Newman's *A Music Critic's Holiday* and Constant Lambert's *Music Ho!*—a tradition that has strongly colored the opinions of the most influential of present-day critics, though Lipman attempts to dissociate himself from them. What characterizes this tradition is a nostalgia for nineteenth-century romanticism and a consequent rejection of almost all of recent music in one indiscriminate bolus.

The matter of music's decline may indeed be a debatable question, but I have little question about the decline of the books *on* the decline. Lipman starts with an indictment of contemporary composers for failing to satisfy the taste of music lovers and for causing the performer's "parasitic relationship to the past." But this in no way prepares us for the fact that his book is a collection of articles drawn mainly from the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Commentary*, with all the pitfalls that a collection of this sort is prey to. An attempt was obviously made to organize the articles around his thesis. After having had my curiosity aroused as to how he would support his incendiary claim, however, I found myself frustrated by having to wade through such matters as Wagner's involvement in a love triangle and the conflict in Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* between Man's word and God's, or the reference book data on the main musical figures discussed.

Lipman's argument that mainstream performers, subject to "lessening enthusiasm from the audience," do not play twentieth-century music since they place their careers in jeopardy if they do, is

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an improvement over what we were getting from the critic emeritus of *The New York Times,* Harold Schonberg, who on one occasion went so far as to allege that "the big names of yesteryear" (that is, composers) had had sufficient exposure ("every orchestra played its share") and that the public, having had "a chance to immerse itself," had decided against their music. But ultimately Lipman restores us to the same premise: the composer is delinquent because his music does not have immediate appeal.

Those of us who reject immediate appeal as a criterion of artistic excellence are assumed to believe the contrary: good art *always* goes unrecognized in its time. Some people *do* believe this, and have been known to rig boos and catcalls at their premieres. There are also people who maintain that audiences have only to familiarize themselves with new music—any of it—to embrace it. One need not go to either of these extremes to acknowledge that a work has a better chance to last if it does not give up its secret too easily, if it allows us, as Henry James put it in the preface to *The Wings of the Dove,* to "feel the surface, like the thick ice of the skater's pond, bear without cracking the strongest pressure we throw on it." The attempt to discredit any such initial difficulty (James called it a "luxury") that a fine new work of art may impose led the English critic, Ernest Newman, to the preposterous conclusion that the glorious introduction to Mozart's "Dissonance" Quartet, K. 465, is really a "dubious piece of writing" which "does not quite 'come off.'" For only in this way was he able to exonerate Mozart's pedantic contemporary, Giuseppe Sarti, who, speaking for the audience of his day, said the work was packed "with such capital errors," that no one with "sound taste" could conceivably have written it.

The purveyors of the decline theory have a circumscribed notion of what music should be. When Lipman states we "judge every fresh masterpiece by the standards of the hallowed past," he seems to be positing a reasonably objective, traditionalist principle for dealing with music in terms of what it has been. But when he also states, "the nineteenth century remains for the music-loving audience the century of choice and the very model of musical creation," and when he further indicates that as a critic he acts as the public's agent in seeing to it that this principle is adhered to, the objectivity falls away. On what basis can such privileged status be bestowed upon the nineteenth century? Is it that it produced more masterpieces than any previous century—which would be to judge works of art by bulk, as if they were potatoes. Or is it that if we were to take a

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poll, any nineteenth-century masterpiece would win out over any eighteenth-century one—which would be to judge works of art as if they were political candidates. Surely there is no shortage of people who favor the eighteenth-century classical literature. And what of the recent proliferation of fans of the baroque—Vivaldi in particular? If we are to play the numbers game, it might be a good idea to have statistics and a clearer definition of the different audiences. There is no reason to assume a monolithic public. Lipman, as a former concert pianist, evidently has in mind the audience for piano recitals, where nineteenth-century music is naturally played more than anything else, since it was not until that century that the pianoforte, which came into existence in the middle of the eighteenth century, was fully developed.

Composers are perfectly aware (most of them) that their audience is a minority. As a consequence they are necessarily under attack from any critic who writes from the point of view of the mainstream. They should ideally have their own spokesman with an intimate knowledge of the musical scores (often the only substantial access to their music nowadays), instead of being at the mercy of critics whose preoccupation is performance, and who justify a total abnegation of the role of mediator between composer and public by acting as if it were demeaning to deal substantively with anything that does not have the stamp of an assured "masterpiece." If, however, criticism arose out of a genuine engagement with the new music itself, the obsession with whether a new work is or is not a "masterpiece" would cease obstructing the sources of information. To be told whether a new work is or is not a masterpiece is not really substantive. There are many more cogent things a listener should know about it besides this.

Lipman does not make it altogether clear how the nineteenth century is to be used as a model, but his warm treatment of Rachmaninoff (a composer who is admittedly undervalued) provides a hint of the direction in which his predilections lie. Any composer, of course, should be free to use the nineteenth century in any way he pleases. He should be equally free to find his inspiration in any other period, but when he does he inevitably brings down the wrath of the purveyors of the decline theory, who in such cases find the reliance on the past unnatural. For over half a century now, critics have been attacking the neoclassic works of Stravinsky for their alleged absence of stylistic integrity, and Lipman, who grants that Stravinsky's "absolute mastery is never in doubt," keeps this incredible legend

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alive, pointing condescendingly to Stravinsky's "daring use of other people's work, and his appropriation of that work with so little violence to its creators." If Stravinsky had so little style of his own during his neoclassic period, how is it that when the works of this period exerted a powerful influence over so many younger composers, the very critics who were most vocal on the subject of his stylistic anonymity were the first and the loudest to castigate these composers for the clear traces of his music in theirs?

It is sad, indeed, that it should be necessary at this late date to have to continue to deflate the legend of Stravinsky as glorified *pasticheur,* and to point out that such a notion is simply the result of a failure to approach the music as a kind of collage. At a superficial level the borrowed elements may function as parody. But the main action is in the way they are reshaped, even distorted, to yield new, highly personal configurations, qualities, and structure. Failure to focus attention on the action is failure to hear Stravinsky's music. The public could learn to live with the distortions as readily as they have learned to live with cubism, were they not so misled by chroniclers who persist in questioning the validity of the method itself. I'm not sure how much of the action Lipman hears. As a pianist he performed difficult new music, so he should be expected to hear in greater depth than most. However, even when allowances are made for the fact that he writes for the lay reader, I find a surprising dearth of concrete musical references in his book, and one of the few technical observations on Stravinsky does not demonstrate particular expertise in dealing with twentieth-century musico-theoretical concepts: Stravinsky's late serialism, he writes, "stays well within his own brand of diatonicism," so that it would seem that even when Stravinsky tried to advance (and this only "through the good offices of Craft") he did not succeed in getting very far. The put down is rather strained, since it would be hard to prove Stravinsky's serialism is less "advanced" than, for example, Webern's, and even if one could, it would not argue for a lower ranking of the music itself.

Lipman's preference is clearly for Arnold Schoenberg, which is, of course, consistent with his inclination towards romanticism—mid-European in its orientation. In another way, the preference is not so consistent. For, except in his serial works, Stravinsky is more accessible than Schoenberg, even though collage may cause a problem. Yet, according to Lipman, Schoenberg, notwithstanding the fact that he is "admired at a distance," is "the only name of our time to occupy the same kind of niche in the history of music as that

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of the greatest composers of the past 250 years—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms." This is puzzling after being told again and again that music's decline is symptomized by the failure of a sufficiently wide musical audience to embrace it.

I wonder if it would not be fruitful to consider the possibility that it is not music that is in decline, but in some sense the audience—or rather, that the vastly changed conditions since musical performance became an industry and an arm of mass culture are singularly unfavorable to serious creativity. Public concerts go back only to about 1800, and they had barely become the focal point of musical activity when they were enormously expanded by the electronic media. With little time for adjustment the composer found himself pursuing his experiments within a vast arena. While he now can seek refuge in modern music groups as poets seek refuge in the little magazines, he does so only at the risk of getting inferior performances. I remember how envious my friend Delmore Schwartz was when, as young composers, some of us had the unusual good fortune of having our first attempts at orchestral writing broadcast coast-to-coast. We had more reason to envy him for his coterie affiliations, since a mass setting is a poor place for flexing one's muscles and taking risks. A chance in the big arena can be a one-time affair upon which success or failure of an entire career hinges.

According to one endorsement of the book quoted on the jacket, Lipman sets music "firmly in a social and intellectual context," but he deals mighty little with issues such as this one. He sees the problem as internal to the art, and it would seem we have simply to banish most music written since about 1910, getting composers to make a fresh start. He finds this a time for "watching and waiting," which is like Harold Schonberg telling us we may expect the "Big Man" to come along and rescue music from its desuetude. Both critics seem to be advocating a kind of hiatus, during which composers take a sabbatical, or during which performance of their music is suspended, until they write the proper kind. But what context will there be for anyone to function within? Even the savior who might fulfill Mr. Lipman's requirements needs a field of operation out of which to emerge.

ARTHUR BERGER

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THREE NOVELS

FALLING IN PLACE. By Ann Beattie. Random House. $10.95

LOON LAKE. By E.L. Doctorow. Random House. $11.95

THE SECOND COMING. By Walker Percy. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $12.95

To deal immediately with the obvious in *Loon Lake*: it is all a piece of reflection. There are two narratives, two writers, Warren Penfield and Joe Korzeniowski, two of this, two of that, and all this doubling in the text is metafictively redoubled. Joseph Korzeniowski, after all, is the Polish name of Joseph Conrad. The name is pasted on Joe K. at the end of the novel and it functions like an asterisk. There is doubtful matter here; something is omitted. How is Joe K. like Joseph Conrad? Well, Conrad abandoned Polish for English, moved from ship to shore, from without to within, and became at last a Very Important Person. To the extent that Joe K. is an *arriviste,* he is like Conrad—and there the resemblance ends. He is without Conradian intelligence, incapable of Conradian reflection, and as a writer he has no standing whatever beside Conrad. A hustler who rises to the summit of American imperial power, Joe K. writes himself out of a grimy proletarian fiction into the happy language of the American success fable, and does not ask what is lost in the translation. Yet, there is a shadowy question in the looseness of the analogy, for E. L. Doctorow has himself gone from writing unprofitably in the Conradian tradition about losers, *The Book of Daniel,* to the stunts and tricks of a popularized metafiction in *Ragtime.* What *is* lost in the translation? *Loon Lake* is about Making It, and making it big, and at the same time it broods about failure, it points to the absence of Conradian depth, and reflects.

Joe K. begins the novel and ends it, drawing the fiction round to this signature: "Master of Loon Lake." Mirrors, doubles, reflection. Loon Lake is a place in Nature and a place in the Mind, and it is real estate, property. It belongs to the painter and poet, those kindred spirits, and it belongs to the baronial capitalist. Above all, it is the property of the novelist, who is truly the ultimate "Master of Loon Lake." It is a guilty possession, an uncertain mastery, and this, to a large extent, is what is in the reflection of Loon Lake: guilt, anxiety, betrayal, all the things that go with property. Loon Lake is a

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property. *Loon Lake* is a property. So the writer holds a mirror up to nature, and we see in it two writers, each in a different relation to the meaning of the lake as property, holding mirrors up to it. To become the Master of Loon Lake, to write the novel *Loon Lake*, Joe K. must embrace the prosy *mythos* of capitalism and reject the poetic *mythos* of revolution. He does this peremptorily, the turn is from left to right, and he never looks back, except here in *Loon Lake*. What's to choose, we might ask. This novel is about the Great Depression, but it is written from the disillusioned perspective of the Small Depression in the seventies. We know what went on in the thirties. We know what became of the thirties. Penfield can offer Joe only an embittered and inconsequential poem, *Loon Lake*, and the project of shooting the capitalist, Frank Bennett, dead, which constitutes, in Doctorow's nutshell, the romantic-revolutionary heritage, whereas Bennett, who signifies Becoming in the full Faustian sense, who loves the angelic flier Lucinda, and has commerce with the Devil, Crapo, this ample Bennett, this perdurable capitalist, confers the *Ding-an-sich*, Loon Lake, and all its perks.

Here, then, is the Recognition Scene in Joe's *Loon Lake.* He is about to take the fall for the murder of the union fink, Red James. The cops are grilling him hard. They don't buy his story, which is essentially true. There's not enough prostitution and betrayal in it. They make him out to be a petty thief who slept with Red James's wife and murdered James for the insurance policy. When Joe recognizes this truth, that sorry truth, he begins to sing. He gives them Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. He gives them Cagney and Bogart. He writes them into a movie. And this movie might indeed be a version of Hammett's *Red Harvest*, for there, too, in Hammett's "Personville," betrayal lies within betrayal, everyone plays a double role, and capitalism presides. Joe boldly recreates himself in this script: he is not a petty thief, he is the son of the biggest of thieves, Frank W. Bennett, and nothing is as it seems. He is 'free' now to write his own fiction, to make himself up as he goes along using whatever material is available—portions of Penfield's text, things read in the newspaper, seen in the movies, anything. He talks himself right out of this tough spot and, after several turns of plot, he talks himself right into Bennett's shoes. In an epiphany that is the brightest moment in *Loon Lake,* Joe discovers that writing *is* appropriation, and in that flash he is free, and so chooses the property over the poem: he chooses Bennett.

Largely because of the appeal of *Ragtime,* and all the news of its

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imminent film version, *Loon Lake* has made a big splash. Walker Percy's *The Second Coming* arrived quietly upon the scene. None of his novels—*The Moviegoer, The Last Gentleman, Love in the Ruins, Lancelot*—have become properties, and yet Percy's work is substantial, and each novel has enlarged the place he holds in modern American literature. *The Second Coming* begins on a golf course in Linwood, North Carolina. Standing in a bunker with his sand iron, appraising the lie of his ball, Will Barrett, a wealthy, retired Wall Street lawyer whose wife has just died and whose only daughter is about to be wed, passes out, falls down in the sand trap, and wakes with the question of existence before him. At the same time, in another place in the novel, a young woman, Allison Huger, is planning her escape from a mental hospital, methodically writing a script for it so that she will know precisely what to do and say. Their paths will cross on the golf course, in Arcady, and this crossing generates the meaning of *The Second Coming.* Will Barrett and Allison Huger will be "born again," together, on the far side of despair, in belief. What that belief is, apart from a romantic belief in romance, is not all that clear. There are soft spots in Percy's resolution of the novel, sentimental instances, and yet the feeling of the narrative, of its style, is marvelous. It could indeed be argued that the romance does not wrong the seriousness of *The Second Coming,* that, contrariwise, Percy suffuses the romance with seriousness. If this is what *The Second Coming* is—a serious romance—then perhaps the question of its smooth ending is beside the point.

No one is kinder to despair than Walker Percy. Despair is always sweet in his fiction, the mark of intelligence, of sensibility, of those who are attuned to the disharmony of the cosmos. It is well-spoken and yet direct in its address. "Do you believe in God?" Barrett asks his glib minister, Jack Curl. It is a Kierkegaardian question. Those who are in despair recognize each other, affiliate, fall in love with each other and constitute, in effect, the finest cadre among the classes of men and women. They see each other across the crowded room. There is a right response to Barrett's question, but he'll not get it from Jack Curl. Only Allison—reemerging in discourse, relearning language, building a lexicon—will understand the despair that makes the question, will take Barrett as he is. She speaks a strange, disconnected idiom that is in part the broken speech of a mental patient whose brain has been "buzzed" too often by electroshock, and which is yet also the purer, halting speech of the child who is striving to learn what words mean, how sentences

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work, why people speak the way they do. As Percy constructs this idiom, it is at once poetic and oracular. Allison is nothing less than the Angel of the Lord who comes to those who truly despair. Just as, equally so, Barrett is the Aged Prince who has come to break the curse that would keep her enthralled. At this point in *The Second Coming,* when Barrett tumbles from the cave, where he has gone to confront God or die, right into Allison's greenhouse, her hideout, Providence and Plot coincide. Barrett is delivered. Allison is set free. *Amor vincit omnia.*

A lake in the Adirondacks, a cave in North Carolina. Ann Beattie knows where the "real" heart of darkness is in America, and who the natives are. The blurb on the jacket of *Falling in Place* tells us that "Ann Beattie has invaded Cheever and O'Hara country and, with unfailing pitch and stunning humor, made it her own." This is almost true. Southern Connecticut is undoubtedly the actual site of our deepest horror, but Beattie's grasp of her material is far from sure-handed. She is very good at describing the natives, the pubescent John Joel and his ferret friend Parker, and the odious Mary, John Joel's adolescent sister, a perfect bitch. But the older characters, those enmeshed in adultery and *angst*, lack dimension. The men, John Knapp, Spangle, Bobby, are poorly conceived. When Knapp feels desperate, he drives fast. Beattie does not get inside the way men think, feel, speak, behave, and since Knapp's role is important in the novel, this is at last a significant failure. How far, then, does Beattie's invasion take us? Does it get as far as John Cheever's *Bullet Park*? No, but it does get into Babbitt's bathroom, and there Beattie is as deft as Sinclair Lewis.

Inside the suburban American house, in the far interior, is the horror, the horror. No one escapes the banal meaning of the "modern" bathroom with all its shiny appliances in *Babbitt,* and no one escapes the junky significance of the adolescent bedroom in *Falling in Place.* There is no other place to *be* in this suburban world, except up a tree. That is where we find John Joel as Beattie's novel begins, and that is where the novel ends. The crack of John Joel's pistol, which drops his sister, is a misfire. What indeed sustains *Falling in Place*, carries it, is not the acuity of Beattie's characterization or the intensity of the several passions, but the skill with which she weaves pop-ephemerae into her prose. The much-kissed poster of Peter Frampton on Mary's bedroom wall locates Mary's mind for us, just as the hit songs, the inscribed t-shirts, the dope jargon, all the quick messages in contemporary talk, fix the other characters in their

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superficiality. Beattie does not get beyond this surface, because, horribly, there *is* nothing beyond this surface.

NEIL SCHMITZ

CLOTHES MAKE PEOPLE

SEEING THROUGH CLOTHES. By Anne Hollander. The Viking Press. $25.

Anne Hollander has combined a compelling insight, impressive learning, and a refreshingly literal attitude toward painting to produce a provocative, ambitious, and—alas!—hopelessly idealist and wrongheaded book. *Seeing Through Clothes* offers the most complete consideration of the relation between fashion and art available in any language. Neither art history, as usually understood, nor history of fashion or costume, the book draws upon all three genres, and much general culture besides, to interpret the stylized and conventional ways in which humans perceive the human form. In short, we see each other clothed. Representations of the human form inescapably look through clothes. The nudes offered us in painting are clothed bodies that happen not to be wearing their clothes. "There is no historically authentic look that is not the look of an artistic style." And the dress that governs the artist's perception is itself an artistic act. "Dress is a form of visual art, a creation of images with the visual self as its medium."

The core of Hollander's argument thus rests on her striking perception that we never look on beauty bare. She weaves a multicolored design of strands that run from the earliest recorded depictions of the human form to contemporary fashion photography. Although the unfolding of the argument depends upon changing historical manifestations of the relationship between art and clothes, and of changes in fashion and in styles of perception, this is not a historical study, properly speaking. *Seeing Through Clothes* is organized into six large sections: I. Drapery; II. Nudity; III. Undress; IV. Costume; V. Dress; VI. Mirrors. In large measure, each section looks upon the same material through a different prism, but

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the earlier chapters focus somewhat more on earlier art, and the later chapters somewhat more on more recent art, fashion, and costume. Nonetheless, the overlap is considerable. And the historical argument about the development and nature of fashion must be extracted from successive sections: it does not constitute an explicit organizing principle. Since Hollander ranges so widely, it is understandable that she prefers a thematic organization. But the studied willfulness with which she imposes those themes upon historical considerations reflects an interpretive strategy that is more than simple convenience. It is a decisive weapon in her determination to defeat any materialist, sociological, symbolic, or other explanation for fashion.

In her own words: "Since the look of Western clothes is so closely allied to its changing image in art, all temporal changes and contemporaneous differences in them may best be perceived as changes and differences in the elements of an artistic form, not just as changes in social custom, economic pressure, or psychological emphasis." Clothes, she continues in an apparent slash at Barthes, cannot even be appropriately compared to verbal behavior. Nor should they be described, as they sometimes are, as personal "statements." Rather, they should be likened to "public readings of literary works in different genres of which the rules are generally understood." Such a genre develops in accord with individual modifications, "but always in terms of previous examples within it and rules that define it." Thus, she insists, "Western clothing is not a sequence of direct social and aesthetic *messages* cast in a language of fabric but, rather, a form of selfperpetuating visual fiction, like figurative art itself." So much for history as normally understood. The formal tradition Hollander invokes remains uncontaminated by personal and social meanings, by technological change, by the changing relations between sexes and classes.

> "With clothes as with art, it is the picture itself, not the aspects of culture or personality it reveals, that demands the attention first and appeals directly to the imagination through the eye. Because they share in the perpetually idealizing vision of art, clothes must be seen and studied as paintings are seen and studied—not primarily as cultural by-products or personal expressions but as connected links in a creative tradition of image making."

The formal properties of fashion and its internally self-refer-

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ential evolution are important parts of the story, but can, by no stretch of the imagination to which Hollander is so committed, be confused with the whole story. If there is no justification for those reductionist readings that present fashion as the unmediated manifestation of this or that social interest, technological change, or state of mind, there is equally no justification for that idealism which presents fashion as *sui generis* in its essence. Hollander, who culls so deftly from such a broad spectrum of intellectual and artistic work, might at least have pondered the work—itself idealist enough—of Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn, sufficiently preoccupied with the internal development of intellectual, and by extension, artistic paradigms, appreciates the institutional foundations of such work. And thus, although he too fails to give adequate weight to the extrinsic influences on changes in paradigms, he allows for some minimal social foundation for formal concerns. Hollander's devotion to her encompassing argument forces her to distort or obscure those very elements of change upon which her own definition and delineation of her subject depend.

Clothes, according to Hollander, "make, not the man but the image of the man—and they make it in a steady, reciprocal accord with the way artists make, not lifeless effigies but vital representations." By Hollander's own account, these representations and the compulsion to make them are closely linked to a particularly western notion of individualism. In her view, the primary function of a western garment, in contradistinction to much nonwestern ethnic dress, fold costume, and other garb, "is to contribute to the making of a self-conscious individual image, an image linked to all other imaginative and idealized visualizations of the human body." This tradition of dress is intimately linked to a growing sense of the self as a distinct entity and contrasts directly with the depersonalization that results from the "unfocused" and "overburdened" visual organization of so much nonwestern dress.

Hollander thus links western dress and its representation to particular western preoccupations with the individual. This association is perfectly plausible, so far as it goes, although the flowering of contemporary anthropology, not to mention the political self-consciousness of the nonwestern world, should have taught us to tread lightly in relying exclusively upon our own presuppositions for a guide to the interpretation of other cultures. But it also sounds disconcertingly similar to the venerable presentation of western civilization as the rise and triumph of the human (western, male and

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usually WASP) spirit. Anyone who took a western civilization course more than fifteen or twenty years ago will be perfectly comfortable with the framework.

In this context, Hollander locates the origin of a concern with "naturalism" in the Greece of the fifth century B.C., the origins of fashion in Europe around 1300, and the concern with individualism, manifested in the great tradition of portraiture in Renaissance Italy and its northern extensions. She concedes that technology effected a visual revolution with the camera, but in general, she remains politely steadfast in her rejection of any hint of technological or social influence as inherently reductionist or deterministic. Her loyalty to an uncontaminated idealism doubtless explains the absence from her bibliography of such names as Georg Simmel, Norbert Elias, and Edward Sapir.

Hollander does not permit a serious consideration of the nature of fashion, its historical development, or its special relationship to the western tradition. Her statements about periodization must be ferreted out from the different thematic sections. Yet, her discussion of drapery abounds with subtle discriminations among the various uses of drapery in painting and their evolution. She offers splendid insights in her description of the drapery in François Clouet's portrait of Pierre Quthe in which the drapery does not frame the subject "or hang over and behind him; instead it seems to accompany him rather like a beautifully dressed wife." And she understands perfectly that at least until the late sixteenth century, drapery "always appeared *somewhere* as an element of fashionable dress, a necessary display of raw luxury." She further contends that the mesmerizing appeal of draped fabric has persisted to the present and has fueled the vast textile industry, "for which practical need alone would not account. This vast aesthetic range of cloth was created not by the spinners and weavers of textiles but by the hands and eyes of the artists who continually represented it and celebrated it and made it more beautiful in our sight."

None familiar with the proven cost-effectiveness of the gargantuan advertising industry would contest the impact of visual representations. But there is something less than serious in denying so totally the extraordinary transformations in medium, audience, and purpose over the centuries. That royalty and nobility valued paintings as celebrations of themselves and their power cannot be doubted. But the visual display depicted in those paintings was

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amply exploited in direct ways as well. One might concur that a king who grouped his retainers around him and dressed so that his magnificence both crowned and outshone their assembled grandeur had a picture of "the king in court" in his mind's eye. But those dukes of Anjou who insisted that their retainers wear their colors had a few other matters in mind as well. There is a psychology of hegemony and domination that includes visual representation, but is anchored in a broader web of complex processes of perception and internalization.

Hollander's interpretation, while arresting, remains schematic and partial. It works best in the sections on drapery and nudity. However much indebted to Kenneth Clark, she is brilliant on the complex relationship between nude, naked, and clothed forms. She is acutely sensitive to the dialectical tension between dress and undress, with its inescapable erotic and pornographic overtones. The perception that prevailing fashion governs the depiction of the unclothed body lies at the core of the book, and she makes her case splendidly. She is at her commonsensical best in discussing the length of legs and torsos and the fashions that dictate changes in those proportions. Elegantly, if with pleasant understatement, she identifies the attributes of sexiness in different epochs. This is "demythologizing" in the service of understanding, no mindless toppling of cultural giants for the mere effrontery of it. Similarly, Hollander displays keen critical intelligence, as well as great knowledge, in her discussion of Hollywood's use of historical costume.

Since, at her best, she is so very good, she disappoints in her unnecessary rigidities. Certainly, fashion entails the construction of an image, a presentation of the self, and any such representation is indebted to previous representations. But to whom is the image to be presented and why? To identify the birth of fashion in the west at about 1300, and to associate it with the rise of individualism, only makes sense if the locus, embodiment, and referents of fashionable dress are also identified. For, in 1300, most Europeans still lived in "costume" or traditional dress. An essential part of the story of fashion is its gradual conquest of the perceptions and habits of dressing of entire societies. And that conquest cannot be dissociated from historical (social, economic, technological, political, ideological, cultural) change. Hollander's refusal to take account of these dimensions of fashion in no small measure explains the weakness of those parts of her book that deal with the modern period. She makes dis-

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cretely telling observations about the influence of the movies on fashion in the twentieth century, on the emergence of a single unified image of the woman in female fashion in a manner that approximated the subdued, harmonious, and complementary dress that had characterized men's fashion since the beginning of the nineteenth century, on the relationship between the ideas of dress reformers and the fashions they were rebelling against. But these perceptions, however striking, do not add up to a coherent analysis of modern fashion. They lack the mastery and consistency that characterize Hollander's discussions of the Renaissance and the baroque and rococo periods. It simply is not possible to ascribe that first dramatic shortening of women's skirts in about 1920 only to the internal dictates of a stylistic tradition.

The changing social role of women in the twentieth century constitutes a cultural, social, and economic fact of the first importance. The challenge it offers to the most cherished and deep-seated western norms of family and of the appropriate sexual division of labor is only beginning to be understood. The reactions against it affect the deepest fibres of our lives. And our fashion, especially the depictions of those fashions, reflect it. It may well be that the birth of fashion, of bourgeois notions of individualism and of the nuclear family are intimately related. If so, the rise of capitalism and of the industrial technology that has fueled the world hegemony of so many western styles cannot be summarily dismissed as irrelevant. Hollander, in fact, does not dismiss them: she ignores them, as if naming them might already conjure up their specters. Nor can one write of modern fashion with no explicit reference to the special role of women as the custodians and manifestations of sartorial display. Hollander's grand tradition of recorded style abstracts entirely from female self-perceptions. Hollander may well insist upon the importance of the individual as subject in the traditions of art and fashion she is assessing. But women in that tradition figured primarily as objects—as the extensions and representatives of men, or occasionally of social and political classes. Hollander writes objectively, neutrally, as it were, of male and female fashion—of the representations of men and women—in the context of a tradition in which a piece of drapery can plausibly be interpreted as "a beautifully dressed wife." To do so is not to illuminate but to mystify.

There are, in John Berger's celebrated title, which Hollander does not cite, "Ways of Seeing." "Seeing through clothes" is one.

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Hollander has marvelously demonstrated how important that way can be. If only she had been willing to acknowledge it as one among many.

ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE

IMAGINATION OF HORROR

LYING LOW. By Diane Johnson. Alfred A. Knopf. $8.95.

The imagination of horror fills the landscapes of Diane Johnson's two most recent novels. It is an imagination matched by the realities of betrayal, violence, and death that define her vision of the modern world. With *The Shadow Knows* (1974), Johnson emerged as a serious voice in American fiction. In *Lying Low,* the 1979 runner-up for the National Book Award, she increases her claim and extends her range. An early reviewer of *Lying Low* questioned whether Johnson writes about "the terror of life in the American now" or, "simpler, profounder, the terror of life." In Johnson's fiction, the terrors are inseparable. All her novels are set in the California to which she migrated through the accident of marriage in the late fifties. Shattering the cocoon—a process touched on in her second novel, *Loving Hands at Home,* and transformed in the darker insights of *Shadow*—Johnson impelled herself into an art that far transcends locale. At her best, she achieves the moral resonance of a Hawthornian world, universal in its probing of the hidden evils of the human heart, peculiarly American in the parochial richness of its context. But, like my village bookstore, which shelved *Shadow* with Agatha Christie, the reader should not be misled in *Lying Low* by the local color of bombmakers, forged identities, and gas-masked policemen. The period details are background to Johnson's subjects: the universality of evil, the ironies of human limitation, and the enduring freshness of human goodness.

Lying Low chronicles four days in the lives of three women who live in Orris, an amalgam of Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Berkeley. Theodora Wait is an unmarried woman of sixty, teacher of

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dance, and rational idealist in a world beyond reason. Her brother, Anton, a noted nature photographer, resides in their ancestral Victorian mansion between marriages. Theo takes lodgers. Marybeth Howe, living under the assumed name of Lynn, is lying low. A fugitive from the sixties, she participated in a bombing that caused an accidental death. Ouida Senza, a Brazilian immigrant, fears deportation because her former employer confiscated her passport when she refused his advances. Marybeth, aptly, works for a camera store called Photophobia; Ouida studies typing and English, and otherwise spends her time plundering with radiant naivete the religions and magic of all hemispheres in an effort to hasten universal harmony. The action begins with the premonitory death of the Waits's hen at the jaws of a neighbor's dog, develops the consequences of Marybeth's recognition by a nice young man from her home town, and of Ouida's preparations for a "benefit," a concept furnished by the local Presbyterian church, by which she hopes to raise money to buy back her passport. Catastrophe strikes when Theo, trapped as a hostage in a prison break, is murdered by the local police.

In *The Shadow Knows,* Johnson spoke through the voice of a beleaguered young divorcee who recognizes in the tangible signs of doom—a mutilated door, a phantom phone caller, an insane housekeeper—emblems of the modern condition. In *Lying Low,* she juxtaposes points of view and events to dramatize the disparity between ideals and reality that is the essence of her critique. As in *Shadow*, the prevailing condition is danger, the salient emotions are anxiety and fear. But where the horror of the earlier novel explodes in the gothic scenes of its narrator's living past, *Lying Low* presents the terror of existence as a daily banality, the reiterated lesson of an American primer. Instead of maniacal phone calls and mysterious attacks, we have a series of homely paradigms. Freda Hen killed by Mark the Labrador illustrates the fragility of life; the wholesome young husband who sells Theo a "Home-Alert" system en route to the Co-op to buy Sure-jell and paraffin for his wife's "preserving" makes bombs that will kill Theo. Death hovers over the action, a motif reiterated in Theo's recollections of the sexually aroused Finn who expired in her hotel room and the little girl swept from shipboard in a storm. With appropriate foreboding, Theo fears she is the "angel of death"; Ouida sees death in the shadow of the vacuum cleaner on the wall. In a world of zodiac murders, freedom is an anachronism, a condition proclaimed by the innocent elegance of the Wait mansion: iso-

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lated by the clamorous freeway that has obliterated its view, the house symbolizes the modern as the discontinuity between past and present.

The ironies of idealism pervade public and private life. The corruption of governments is matched by the bland ruthlessness of the radicals who oppose them. Police knowingly detonate explosives in a van containing prisoners and hostages. The prison-break planners use Theo as a "front" without her knowledge. Intolerance and intimidation flourish in all classes and colors. A jingoistic black woman refuses Ouida a driver's license because she pronounces the eye-chart letters with an accent. Ouida's "benefit" a lovingly assembled feijoada, is ruined by a multiracial group of rioters and petty criminals.

Ouida's vision of cosmic interconnectedness provides the novel's most dramatic irony. "'If spiritual harmony included everybody, it could mean perfect peace in the universe,' Ouida said. 'Even the arrival of eternal light. One disorder—say in the kidneys—leads to another . . . and thus to all things, all things being connected.'" Agrees Theo, "'That's in a way why I'm going to Fontana to help those poor men.'" But control of one's own fate or the world's is an illusion. Ouida, aspiring for all to universal goodness, finds instead the "aspirador," the vacuum cleaner that becomes the symbol of her defeat. With the failure of her feijoada, she gives up the attempt to be free, exchanging for the servitude of Brazilian tradition the domestic slavery of marriage to a black man who—Ouida's touch of racism—is too dark to be her social equal. The inflexible logic of her idealism drives Theo to her fate as one of the "poor creatures, poor prisoners everywhere." For Marybeth, the irony is gentler. Through exile and daily terror, she has achieved expiation. Recognition becomes deliverance, and the contending corruptions of authority and rebellion suggest the morality of her retreat to private happiness.

As in Johnson's other novels, women are the primary actors. Marybeth's Chuck, in his moral and sexual perfection, is too good to be true. Theo's eminent brother is passive and indifferent, jolted belatedly into awareness of the human condition. Ouida's suitor, Mr. Griggs, has been cheated by the Bank of America of money painfully earned for his crippled child. But the sins of corporate America do not make Ouida's capitulation any less ironic.

Johnson's endings invite criticism: the finale of *Shadow* is reductive; after repeated forebodings, the catastrophe of *Lying Low* may

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appear pat, a fading tintype of rebellion. But the denouement is integral to the novel's dramatic and moral ironies. Theo's fate is doubly appropriate, for beneath her idealism lies a chaos of inner violence. Fantasies of violence merge with sexual fear as Theo refuses to rent rooms to masculine men because "you never knew when you would get one with an extra chromosome. . .the one that turned them violent and criminal." Learning that Marybeth is a renegade, Theo assumes that the girl must be "some kind of dangerous criminal—a murderess, I suppose. A murder is the kind of thing I would be most likely to remember." Most damning is Theo's inability to love. Faced with a human crisis when the bomber's child disappears, she collapses. Her response to Marybeth's plight is excitement, not compassion. Rapt in the titillation of terror, "Theo seemed to glow with life, almost joy." For Theo, thus, character is destiny. But retribution does not resolve the larger issue of meaning. For Johnson, the problem is not the structure of catastrophe but the clarity of her attitude toward Theo. While the character's dualism emerges from the novel's evidence, her articulate perceptions seem often to render the authorial view. In consequence, the portrayal of Theo is more equivocal than complex, the intention behind it ultimately ambiguous.

Johnson's sense of comic incongruity illuminates the tragedy of her world; the richness of her invention mitigates its horror. And there is a more direct affirmation. To the insecurity and terror of modern life, Johnson opposes the moral energies of the private individual, decent, imperfect, and vulnerable. Marybeth cares about her fellow residents and, liberated from the inhumanity of categories, "thinks of them as them." Ouida, without Theo's narcissistic voyeurism, is "heavy-hearted to think of trouble for her pretty American friend." In the poignancy of Marybeth's sensitivity and need, in the luminous portrait of Ouida, Johnson implies such redemption as may exist. There is no ascending spiral curve, and the retreat to privatism may engender a Mr. Griggs. But Marybeth's kindness remains, and Ouida projects without cease the energy of endurance. Johnson wrote recently: "If it is true . . . that we know ourselves through the recognition of others, with whom we share the condition of humans, then prose fiction can do the best that can be done for us to console and affirm." It is an apt description of her achievement in *Lying Low*.

BARBARA ROSECRANCE

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PURIST

LAURA RIDING'S PURSUIT OF TRUTH. By Joyce P. Wexler. Ohio University Press. $12.

Driven out of idyllic Mallorca, where she and Robert Graves wrote poetry and published small volumes of esoteric writing at the Seizin Press, the poet Laura Riding wrote an antiwar manifesto. This three-page document was on exhibit at the New York Public Library amongst a remarkable collection of manuscripts from the Berg Collection on "The Thirties in England." Across the room in another glass case were the drafts and typescript of Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938). What is odd is not that Riding and Woolf should have written manifestos in the thirties, but how similar the two manifestos are in theme and argument, though Woolf's pamphlet is rich in symbol and metaphor, sensuous appeals to the eye and ear—qualities which Laura Riding, purest of pure poets, would have abhorred.

Few feminist protests were heard in what Auden called that "low dishonest decade." The last thing that men wanted to hear as they mounted the barricades in a fight for freedom was that war revealed irrational male sex drives. Riding received little response to her plea and she and Robert Graves left London for New Hope, Pennsylvania, where their last literary experiment in living broke up in a personal debacle, and Laura Riding married the poetry editor of *Time* magazine, Schuyler B. Jackson. She gave up poetry as too impure a medium for the pursuit of truth; domestic thinking and linguistic study have been her preoccupations ever since.

Chicago critic Joyce Wexler, who has taught at Barat College and Loyola University, has written the first book on this important and influential American poet. Laura Riding's several volumes of poetry published from 1926 through 1928, and her critical essays, reveal a powerful mind and talent. "You are the one to save America from the Edna Millays!" wrote Allen Tate in 1925. But the very authority of her intellectual and poetic presence militates against historical recognition of her achievements. She is one of those harshly rigorous figures, whom one would rather read than meet. The public personalities of her former students and disciples from Ransom and Tate, now considered the founders of American New Criticism, to

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that grand old man of English letters, Robert Graves, have obscured not only her influence on them, but her original contribution to literary criticism.

Joyce Wexler documents in detail Laura Riding's method of close textual analysis, her influence on Southern Fugitives Ransom and Tate, who admired her and boasted of her association with them, and the development of her argument in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), written with Graves. William Empson claims the book was the inspiration for his famous *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. Wexler has rescued one of those "stranded ghosts" from literary obscurity and told a fascinating story as well. Irony is a game of both history and poetry. For the timing of a Riding revival coincides with the rebellion of feminist critics against the too-formal demands of New Critical exegesis. Will we be forced to acknowledge that it was a woman who invented that Chinese footbinding of the critical imagination?

The book raises many provocative questions, not the least of which are biographical. "Riding's poems portray a mind locked in combat with words and winning," Wexler writes. And so they do. But where did such an original mind come from? How did a Jewish girl from Brooklyn, Laura Riechenthal from Girls' High, in fact become Laura Riding, the queen of modernist poetry, reigning over the Seizin Press and disciples throughout the twenties and thirties in London and Mallorca? Her scepter was invisible but she actually wore a gold wire crown which spelled out LAURA, reports one of the poets, and no one found it odd at all.

Naming names is, of course, what poetry is all about. "I alone say./I alone am not I./I am my name./My name is not my name,/My name is the name." This puzzling "truth-telling" is Riding's definition of the poetic act. And though she will not admit comparisons, that poem was clearly begotten by a literary daughter of Emily Dickinson, another truth-teller, but one who demanded that the poet "Tell the truth but tell it slant" for "the Truth must dazzle gradually/Or every man be blind."

Riding, however, did not want the truth of her poems to dazzle gradually and has been impatient with the blindness of critics. Her Jewish socialist father had wanted her to be an American Rosa Luxemburg. But Laura Riechenthal went from Girls' High to Cornell, briefly married a history instructor and became Laura Gottschalk, went to New York to write poetry, where the admiring Hart Crane called her "Rideshalk-Godding" and then, cooling at her

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authoritative ways, "Laura Riding Roughshod," and "Riding" was the name she chose for herself as poet.

"Analogy is always false," Riding argued, and tried to purge poetry of metaphor, symbol, and myth. What is left beside pure language and thought? If, as she claims, things cannot be known by their resemblance to other things, then the poet is left with a pure language. The reader often finds the poems too abstract, but Riding would claim that thinking itself is not abstract. The title of her second volume of poems, *Love as Death, Death as Death,* conveys what she means. Her kinship with Gertrude Stein is clear, and she published Stein's poems at the Seizin Press in 1929. In *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, a major influence on "the Auden generation," she praised repetition in Stein's work as having "the effect of breaking down the possible historical senses still inherent in the words." Because so much poetry alludes to poetry of the past, this is a revolutionary approach. Riding's abstract poetry reads like an extreme modernist manifesto, and is like nothing so much as those Russian revolutionary early cubist/constructivist paintings of Goncharova and Alexandra Exter. These lines from "In the Beginning," about a daughter's "unpentateuchal genesis," might be painted by a surrealist: "She opens the heads of her brothers/And lets out the aeroplanes/ 'Now,' she says, 'you will be able to think better.'"

Wexler describes the life of the Riding/Graves circle in the late twenties: couples, triangles, rectangles, and, like Bloomsbury, great bursts of creative activity, and attempted suicide. Laura Riding jumped out a window and broke her back. The doctor dispassionately commented on how interesting it was to see a spine completely exposed. It all sounds like Septimus Smith, the mad poet in *Mrs. Dalloway*. But Riding survived, continuing to pursue truth as poet and critic, retreating from the limelight to the solitary pursuit of linguistic purity. Graves and her ex-disciples quarrel about her influence. In an early poem, "Forgotten Girlhood," Riding answers them:

> But don't call Mother Damnable names
> The names will come back
> At the end of a nine-tailed Damnable Strap.
> Mother Damnable, Mother Damnable
> Good Mother Damnable.

JANE MARCUS

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A CRITICAL GARDEN

CRITICISM IN THE WILDERNESS: THE STUDY OF LITERATURE TODAY. By Geoffrey Hartman. Yale University Press. $18.

Geoffrey Hartman is widely recognized as a superb reader of poetry, but he has always been interested in theories of reading and as much fascinated by critical theory as by critical practice. An early work, *The Unmediated Vision* (1954), which influenced a whole generation of graduate students to value the "purity" of the poetic vision, was nonetheless offered as a "contribution to that empirical discourse of method still lacking in the fine arts." Two subsequent collections of essays, *Beyond Formalism* (1970) and *The Fate of Reading* (1975), although containing the usual fare of brilliant explications of poetry, were increasingly laden with reflections on the place of literary criticism in the humanities and the political function of humanistic studies in modern society. Hartman is a generous scholar, always ready to pay tribute and graciously admit his debt to other critics; he is a good citizen of the intellectual community in every sense. In recent years, however, he has had to bear a lot of hostile heat, as he stepped up his claims for the place of theory in literary interpretation and, under the inspiration of Derrida, given vent to his extraordinary talents as a prose stylist in his own critical writings. Now, in *Criticism in the Wilderness*, Hartman strikes back. He does so with wit, good humor, and commendable tact; but his counterattack is sharply polemical and the thrust of his argument consistently aggressive. His aim is to establish the legitimacy of theory in literary criticism (as against what might be called the ideology of taste that normally prevails as the critic's *doxa*) and to determine the extent to which criticism can claim a "creativity" every bit as original as the art about which it speaks.

Hartman's argument is based on an interpretation of the history of literary criticism since the romantic period. In his version, the romantics tended to fuse literature and philosophy, which made them receptive to theoretical considerations in the making of their art, and to conflate rather than to separate poetry and prose, which allowed them to aspire to as much creativity in their critical writings as in their lyrics. Novalis, Friedrich von Schlegel, Coleridge, and Carlyle wrote criticism in the mode of "severe intellectual poems,"

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founding a tradition of criticism that flourished on the continent in writers as diverse as Baudelaire, Nietzsche, Valéry, Kraus, Benjamin, and Lukács, and included philosophers such as Heidegger and Sartre, of whom Derrida and the "deconstructive" critics in general are the heirs. In England and America, however, an alternative, more practical, middle-class, and pharisaical convention prevailed—of which Matthew Arnold was the archpriest and Eliot, Richards, Leavis, the New Critics, and Trilling (though in different ways) were the continuators. Here criticism was conceived to be secondary to literature, its function to guard the purity of language and the common sense of society, and its appropriate style, therefore, decorous, composed, high-toned, and suspicious of "enthusiasm" in any form. The result was a criticism singularly ill-equipped to deal with the "carnivalesque" texts of modernist literature, the metaphysically and politically radical ideas of post-Kantian philosophers, and the experimental but manifestly "creative" criticism of existentialists, phenomenologists, structuralists, and deconstructionists.

In Hartman's own critical work, the crucial change that occurred after *The Unmediated Vision* was due to his encounter with Freud. There is no mention of Freud in *Vision*, but allusions to psychoanalytical theory abound throughout his later books. Freud apparently taught him that the ideal of "purity"—of vision, of representation, of style—is itself a problem, and that the notion of "purification," when elevated to the status of a critical principle, amounts to little more than fetishism. Freud also taught him, it appears to me, that in literary criticism, as in the analysis of dreams, a receptivity to the hesitancies, paradoxes, duplicities, and evasions of texts is more important than any effort to "judge" them or to rank them in hierarchies of valuation that always turn out to be little more than the prejudices of the current cultural moment. This does not mean that Hartman wishes to obliterate the distinction between good literature and bad. It does, however, lead him to argue for a criticism that is more interpretative than judgmental, more sympathetic, even empathetic, than assessmental, and to the cultivation of a critical voice that mimics, rather than "represents," the stylistic features of the texts with which it deals—as in his by-now-notorious essays on Derrida's *Glas* that appeared in *The Georgia Review* in 1975-76.

Criticism in the Wilderness, however, is not written in a "carnivalesque" style, but, appropriately for a polemical book, in the

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idiom of the critical establishment. Like Raymond Chandler's Marlowe, Hartman shows that he can still speak English when his business demands it. But the tone is provocative, more in the manner of Pater and Wilde, laced with a little Hegel and Heidegger, than the establishment is likely to find palatable. The critical ideal remains unremittingly Freudo-Derridian, the aim to establish a deconstructionist "garden" in the "wilderness" of criticism left by the Anglo-American fathers. The use of the garden metaphor to indicate the kind of criticism that Hartman envisions suggests the differences that he admits to between Derrida and himself. Derrida is a bit too extreme for Hartman, a bit too "religious," a bit too "fed by the milk of mourning," to sanction that playfulness which Hartman sees as the only antidote that literature and criticism can offer to the totalitarianism of modern society.

For, strange as it may seem in the light of what I have written thus far, Hartman is ultimately interested in the political significance of literary criticism. "Great art is radical," he says, "But art's contribution to the political sphere remains difficult to formulate." He rejects the easy formulations of this relationship offered by right, center, and left alike. They are all too moralistic for him, and this includes Marxist critical theory. His own inclinations are to view art as a "radical critique of representation" itself, political as well as linguistic and imagistic, following the direction marked out by Kenneth Burke. It is the mark of all totalitarian regimes to insist on the "purity" of their "representational" practices. Art, by contrast, at least in Hartman's version, "recalls the artificial nature or purely conventional status of formal arguments or proofs; the fact that human agreements remain conveniences with the force of law, metaphors with the force of institutions, opinions with the force of dogma. It recalls the prevalence of propaganda, both in open societies . . . and in controlled societies." And so, he concludes, should criticism in our time aspire to anything less? Should criticism continue to pursue the ideal of "purity" when purity itself is art's own worst enemy?

Hartman's obsession with the malignant effects of the ideal of purity suggests the extent to which he views modern political institutions as crypto-religious formations. And it perhaps explains his preference for Hegel over Marx, Heidegger over Sartre, Benjamin over Lukács. For, like every obsessive, Hartman is deeply ambivalent about religion, still fascinated by the sacred though suspicious of priests, still enamored of justice though suspicious of judges. This

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translates into a distaste for institutions of any kind and accounts, I should think, for his allegiance to "deconstructive" criticism, which at least has the merit, in his view, of reminding us of the arbitrariness of any exercise of power under the aspect of "authority." And it accounts, I believe, for his willingness to consider the "possibility of a Marxist analysis" without being "ready to go in that direction, at least not *systematically*." While asserting that "no thinker can pass Freud, Marx, or Nietzsche unconcerned," his own choice has been to pass Marx by. That is, of course, his option, but it renders him singularly unable to conceive a politics of criticism in the service of a criticism of politics. Like religious institutions, political ones claim an authority that is virtually sacred in our time, but the latter, unlike the former, back their claims by power and violence. Playfulness may work against the pomposity of priests and preachers, but it is ineffectual against the police, the army, and the courts.

Hartman grants that, during the period between the two world wars, when western civilization was threatened by the Nazis and Stalinists, the commonsensical and moralizing criticism of the Anglo-American establishment was justified in social terms, even if it did lead to the underestimation of modernist literature. Currently, however, he seems to suggest that the enemy of civilization is not so much the barbarians without as the technicians within. The technicalization of life is what drains it of variety, inwardness, richness, inventiveness. Modernism at least had the merit of valuing these qualities, and he envisions a critical garden in which these would flourish as a reserve against the encroaching wilderness of standardization. This vision aligns him with the more aestheticist wing of Marxist thought—Benjamin and Marcuse, for example. But a politics of criticism has to be based on a theory of politics, not of culture in general. And, for all of its insight, brilliance, and generosity, Hartman's theory of criticism remains an apolitical one. This is not in itself a flaw, but it becomes one in a work which aspires to reconstitute criticism in the service of political liberation.

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